Fortean Times

ISSUE No: 50

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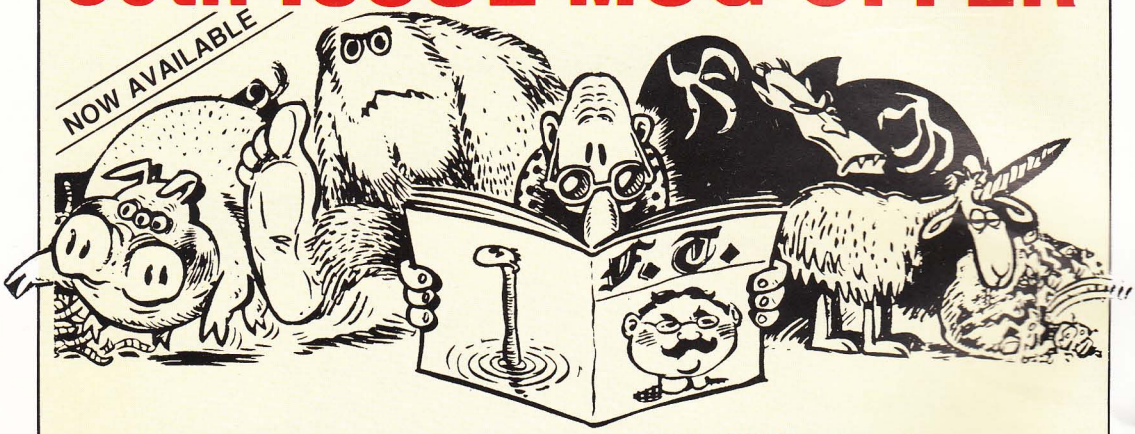

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The Journal of Strange Phenomena.

Summer 1988
ISSN: 0303 5899

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Fortean Times

**96 MANSFIELD ROAD,
LONDON NW3 2HX, UK.**

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As Bob was so busy with Fortean Tomes, I have put this issue together, though it was his turn in our scheme of alternation. We note with sadness the death of Tim Dinsdale, who was a great friend to FT: Doc Shiels pays tribute on page 6. There are lots of great letters but no columns or classified listings, which will be back next time, with a larger review section. There's an encounter with winged 'aliens'; some men in black, devils, and bodies in black; bodies kept above ground and bodies vanishing; Operation Deepscan on Loch Ness; hermits, ghosts and flaming hands; portents, mutants and strangling plants... business as usual, in fact; as we hope it will be for the next 50 issues.

RENEWAL REMINDERS

The subscription form enclosed with the magazine is for ordering back issues and occasional papers, etc. **If your subscription is expiring with the following issue, we will let you know with a sticker on the sub form.**

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If you are **renewing**, please return the address label, as this greatly speeds up the paperwork. British subscribers: don't forget your postcode. It is supposed to speed up delivery.

MISREPRESENTATION

Two comments on an interview with me in *The Independent* (29 Mar 1988) – which promised that FT50 would be out "next month" (hey ho). I never said that the wave of airship sightings in America in the 1890's was an exploded myth, just that some of the stories have been shown to be hoaxes. Also, Fort would have chuckled to be described as "the founder of Fortean beliefs". His work is a great *satire* on belief in general, and he refused to join the Fortean Society. I feel he would have agreed with the two remaining fragments of Pyrro's diciple Timon (d.235 BC): "The phenomenon is always valid"; and "That honey *is* sweet I refuse to assert: that it *appears* sweet, I fully grant."

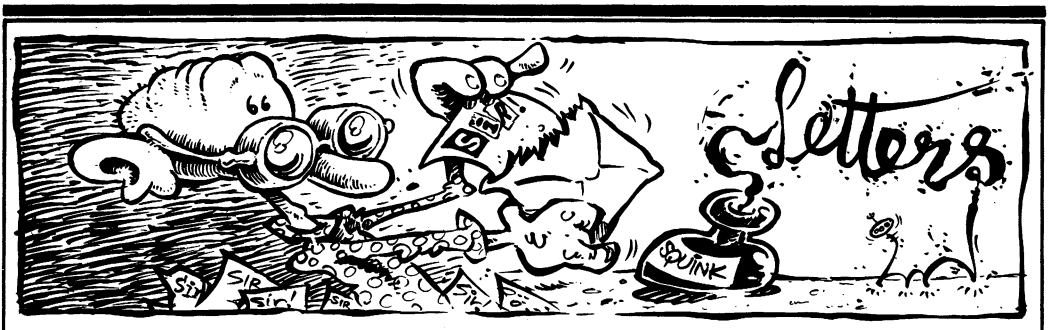
Paul Sieveking

MONSTROUS EXCUSES

Once again our apologies for the long delay. It's all my fault; I'm exhausted by non-stop late-night working on the *Lake Monster Traditions* book. Consequently, processing FT material on my type-setting software has been much delayed. We are keenly aware of our devoted readers enduring larger slices of cold turkey.

I never imagined publishing books could be such hard work. Being a one-man business I'm

Continued on page 74.



THE COLOSSUS FIST

I find it sad that the FT, of all journals, should print so distorted and slanted an account of the Colossus affair [**FT49** p22]. As one of the two correspondents sent out to Rhodes by the Sunday Times, may I set the record straight?

According to Steve Moore, the stone shaped like a fist, which divers found on the sea bed where Ann Dankbaar had said it would be found, has been identified "as having been marked by a mechanical digger or a crane grab during work on Rhodes harbour two or three years previously." The fist was then taken out and dumped in the bay, half a mile away. "What no one seems to have noticed is the unremarkable coincidence of dates. If the rock was dumped 'two or three years ago', that would have been around 1985. When was Ms Dankbaar in Rhodes? 1985. Draw your own conclusions."

My own conclusion is that Steve Moore is an ass. Is he seriously suggesting that Ann Dankbaar, a tourist on a short visit to Rhodes from her home in Australia, teamed up with some local crook to have the fist – conveniently found in the harbour – pulled up without anybody knowing, taken out to sea and dumped, in order that she should be able to proclaim that she had 'seen' the fragments of the Colossus on the seabed, so that she would have the credit for discovering one of the seven wonders of the ancient world?

There is no evidence that the fist was ever in Rhodes harbour, or that the markings were caused by a dredger – one of the original theories, since discounted. For the conspiracy story to be accepted, too, we have got to believe that the plotters were crazily naive. Why should Ann Dankbaar, with her considerable repution in Australia to preserve, have involved herself in the scheme, knowing that as soon as the fist was pulled up for inspection she would be exposed, as she was, to ridicule – and now exposed to such a slur?

A mystery certainly remains: how the stone fist came to be where it was. It may well be that Ann Dankbaar's clairvoyance confused it with the Colossus. Interestingly, though, the divers also found and pulled up pillars, as if there had been a temple on the site, now covered in sand. Even Melina Mercouri has backed down, and this summer there is to be further exploration.

Brian Inglis
London.

[**Steve Moore replies:** Unlike Brian Inglis, I did not have the privilege of being in Rhodes at the time of the Colossus furore, nor of meeting Ann Dankbaar. My summary of the affair was based entirely on the newspaper reports mentioned in the references, and was written in July 87; it thereafter languished for some months, along with the rest of the issue, due to production problems. It will be noted from the refences that I saw no clippings later than 9 July 87.

Since then, **FT** has received an interesting clipping from the *Sunday Times*, 12 July 87, written by Amit Roy and Simon Freeman. They mention (for the first time, I believe) Professor John Barron's opinion that the 'fist' was not shaped by the blades of a dredger or digger.

Nonetheless, Barron was of the opinion that the rock, regardless of who sculpted it or how it got in the bay, is no more than a couple of hundred years old, and is not part of the Colossus. This piece also mentions Mrs Dankbaar's retraction about the fist, "that she had not told the truth" and that "once she was out of Rhodes she would be prepared to explain just how the rock had been deposited in the water sometime after 1985". Roy and Freeman also mention the involvement of Paraschos Kaillis, a wealthy shipping and travel agent in Rhodes, who had long dreamt of finding the Colossus. He is said to have been responsible for bringing Mrs Dankbaar to Rhodes in 1985, and to have been with her when she pin–pointed the fist. The pair have apparently fallen out since then, over who should take credit for the find; credit which might have led to a reward for the finder from the Greek government. Roy and Freeman also mention that Mrs Dankbaar's literary agent had chosen a writer to turn her story into book form. This was Brian Inglis. This would appear to give him an interest in the affair, and I find it curious that he did not declare this in his letter.

With regard to my final paragraph about drawing conclu-

Continued on page 75.

GOOD SHOT!

The British Journal of Psychiatry and the Knoxville (TN) *Physician's Weekly* carried the following bizarre story. George (or Tom, according to *Newsweek*), a 19–year–old Canadian man, suffered for years from a compulsion to take four–hour showers and wash his hands up to 50 times a day. He also had an extreme fear of bacteria and was constantly checking to see whether doors and windows were locked. He had to leave school, and constantly spoke about suicide. Five years ago, taunted by his mother, he took a pistol and shot himself in the mouth. Instead of killing himself, he performed a precise operation on the left frontal lobe of his brain. Surgeons removed the .22 caliber slug, but could not get out all the fragments. His ritualistic behaviour became much less pronounced. His IQ remained unimpaired. His psychiatrist, Dr Leslie Solyom of Shaughnessy Hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia, said it was the first case of self–lobotomy he had ever heard of. [AP] *Independent* 26 Jan; Augusta (GA) *Herald*, San Antonio (TX) *Express–News* 23 Feb; *Arzte Zeitung*, New Philadelphia (OH) *Times-Reporter, D.Telegraph* 24 Feb; *Newsweek* 7 Mar 1988.

For more brain damage, see HOLES IN THE HEAD.

SLEEPING GIRL SWALLOWS SNAKE

An 11-year-old girl from the Sabirabad region of the Caspian Sea Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, identified by her first name Matanet, fell asleep in a field after picking tomatoes in the sun and woke up choking. She was rushed to a childrens' clinic in Baku and made to drink 3.5 pints of salt solution. She vomited up a semi-poisonous 25.6 inch Caucasian cat snake, said *Pravda* on 19 August 1987. An hour later she left the clinic with her parents and went home feeling fine, according to the *Kent County Daily Times* and the *Houston Chronicle* (20 Aug). *The Scotsman* of the same date said she was being treated for a swelling in her stomach, caused by the snake's bite. [UPI] many reports, 20 Aug 1987.

GUN STOPS BULLET

A suspected drug dealer fired at the chest of agent Carlos Montalvo of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in Westland Shopping Mall, Hialeah, Florida; but the bullet was stopped by his own gun. Most of the slug lodged in the barrel. He was treated for facial cuts inflicted by fragments of his 9mm Sig Sauer pistol. We have several similar instances on file. *New Jersey Record, Indianapolis Star* 23 Oct 1987.

JINXED LOCO

Loco D326 was built by English Electric in 1960, one of the first main line diesels to replace express steam traction. On a freezing and foggy evening two years later, she was hauling the London–bound Mid–Day Scot which crashed into the rear of a stationary Liverpool-Birmingham train north of Crewe, killing 18 people and injuring 33.

The loco was repaired and put back to work on the west coast main line. Within months, her picture was flashed across the front pages again: she was waylaid by the Great Train Robbers in August 1963. Her driver received severe head injuries as the gang stole what was then a record £2.6 million from the Post Office train she was hauling through Buckinghamshire towards London.

In 1964, a railman on the roof was electrocuted by overhead wires; and in 1965, her brakes failed outside Birmingham, and she sped out of control towards New Street station at over 40mph. An alert signalman diverted the 100 ton engine onto a goods line, where it hit a freight train and injured the guard. Later, BR issued computerised numbers to its rolling stock, and in her new identity No.40126 behaved immaculately. In 1984, she was based in Carlisle, and was spending her last days on freight and general duties. *D.Telegraph* 3 Jan 1984.

ASSAM BIRD DEATHS

Indian zoologists have sent 25 expeditions over the last eight years to the small village of Jatinga in Assam, northestern India, in an attempt to solve the mystery of the birds. Ever since 1908, a one kilometer stretch of ground between the railway station and the health centre has seen a mass avian suicide. Attracted by lights, birds converge there by night and on landing become immobile, stop feeding and starve. They neither resist capture nor try to fly away. The peak is between September and October, when the monsoon tapers off, and as many as 500 die every night, comprising 36 species including migrants. The phenomenon takes place on dark rainy nights when winds are strong and clouds dense, and may be related to observed changes in geomagnetic and electrical fields that might affect the birds' sense of orientation.

The villagers light up the sky with Petromax lamps on tall bamboo poles to attract more birds, which are then barbecued and eaten. To save the birds, the state government has erected tall towers with powerful light sources to attract them away from Jatinga, and bird–watcher groups have been formed to protect the dazed birds from villagers. The Minister of Environment and Forests recently told parliament that the zoologists have "not come to any conclusion as to the cause of the phenomenon." *Nature* 18 Feb 1988.

EDDIE THE EAGLE

Relax. This is one story that isn't about Britain's celebrated no-hope ski-jumper Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards – though the press coverage that he garnered was a phenomenon in itself. But the Cheltenham plasterer had at least one thing in common with the avian anti-hero who concerns us here: a lot of people didn't think he could fly very well at all.

Eddie was a six month-old American bald eagle who turned up in Ireland in November 1987. The starving and exhausted bird – found in County Kerry by an Irish wildlife ranger – was billed as the first American eagle ever to make it across the Atlantic to Europe. He made the return trip to the States in style, travelling first class on a transatlantic jet. Even Charles Haughey, the Prime Minister of Eire, showed up at the airport to see Eddie off.

Then the doubts set in. Was a young bird really capable of flying 3,000 miles across open ocean, or was the whole business some sort of hoax? Members of the Irish Hawking Club speculated that the eagle had been illegally imported from West Germany, and Maurice LeFranc of the Irish National Wildlife Federation admitted that all existing studies suggested that bald eagles could fly no more than 200 miles at a stretch.

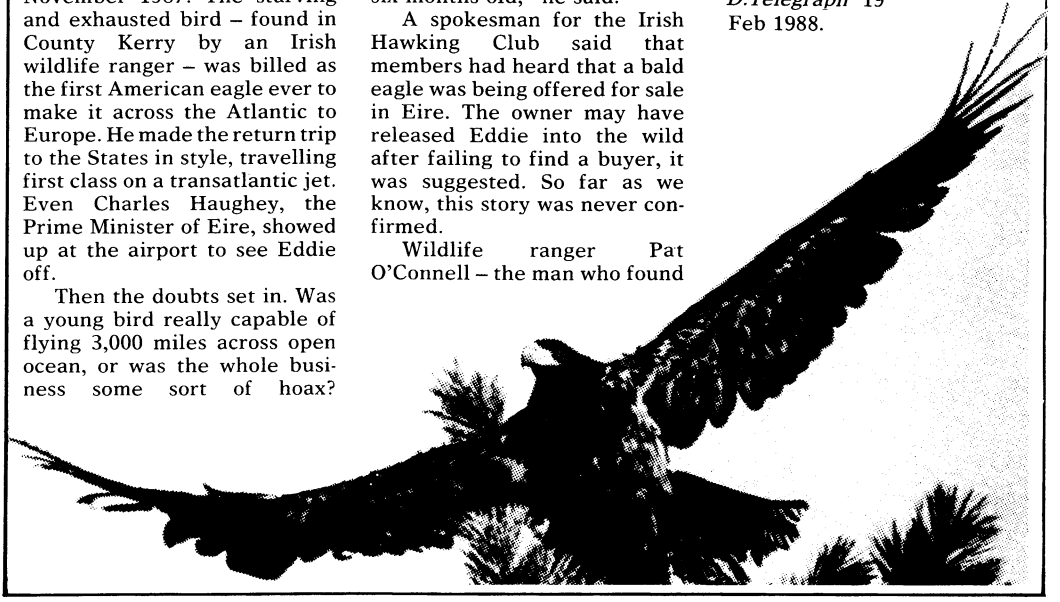
"It is very hard to believe that in all the years that bald eagles have been around, this should be the one to fly the Atlantic, especially as he is only six months old," he said.

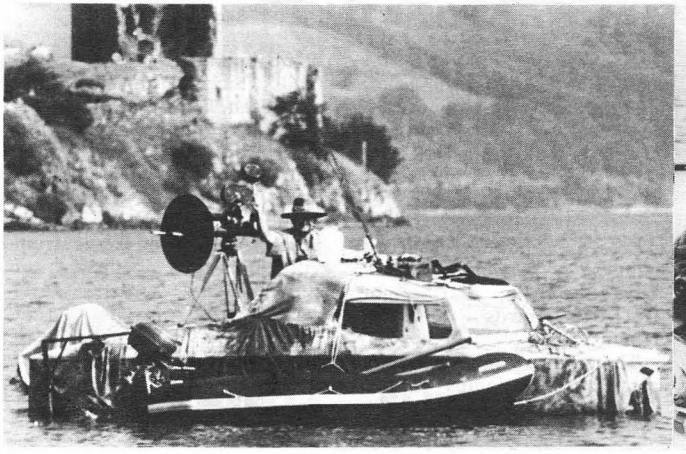
A spokesman for the Irish Hawking Club said that members had heard that a bald eagle was being offered for sale in Eire. The owner may have released Eddie into the wild after failing to find a buyer, it was suggested. So far as we know, this story was never confirmed.

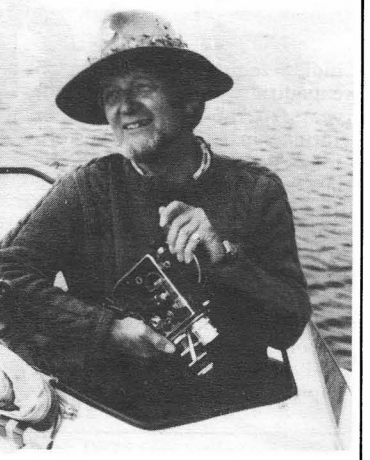
Wildlife ranger Pat O'Connell – the man who found the bird in the first place – denied the story. "It was in such a state it must have flown across the sea," he claimed.

Hoax, preternatural feat of endurance or possible case of teleportation? We leave you to make up your own mind, as usual. *D. Telegraph* 16 Dec 1987 + 12 Jan 1988; *Guardian* + *D.Mail* 11 Jan 1988.

Our picture shows the eagle – renamed Iolar – returned to the wild at Quabbin reservoir, Massachusetts. *D.Telegraph* 19 Feb 1988.







Left: Tim on his beloved *Water Horse* at Loch Ness in 1969, with Urquhart Castle in the background [© FPL].
Right: A portrait of Tim sent to us by his wife, to whom we extend our thanks and condolences.

TIM DINSDALE: d. 14 DEC 1987

Tim Dinsdale, whose name has been associated with the serious field research into the mystery monster of Loch Ness perhaps more than any other in the public imagination, died, in hospital during surgery following two coronary attacks, on December 14, 1987. The memoir and appreciation which follows is by Doc Shiels, to which we add our own sincere condolences to Tim's family and friends. True Fortean that he was, he would not want us to get maudlin. He made many gifts to FT, including copies of his books towards our eventual aim of a reference collection. Ever since we 'discovered' each other, Tim has exhorted us on to greater accomplishments and in doing so to the best of our ability we will also honour him.

Bob Rickard

I remember the excitement, back in 1960, on seeing Tim's historic film of the monster for the very first time, on TV's *Panorama*. I found it totally convincing and, somehow, I instinctively knew that it was authentic and important. A lot of other people must have felt the same way. Interest in Loch Ness and its uncanny beastie suddenly increased and intensified; the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau came into being; expeditions were organized; the hunt was on with a vengence, and Tim was in the vanguard.

For more than a quarter of a century, Tim Dinsdale pursued his frustratingly elusive quarry. After the 1960 encounter, he would have only two more clear sightings of the creature. During the summer of 1970, from the cockpit of his 'patrol boat' *Water Horse*, Tim and two other witnesses saw a 'thick telegraph-pole-like object streaking through the water'. Then on September 6th of the following year, again from the good ship *Water Horse*, he suddenly spotted a black, muscular, wormy thing rise up from the loch. Years later, Tim told me that the creature he had seen on that occasion looked remarkably similar to the monster I photographed at Loch Ness in May 1977.

I met Tim for the first time about twelve years ago, when he came down to Cornwall to investigate reports of Morgawr, the Falmouth Bay sea-serpent. I had, of course, read all the Dinsdale books and was aware of his considerable reputation. 'In person', as they say, I found him to be sharply intelligent, infectiously enthusiastic, and charmingly direct. We quickly became good friends. When I eventually succeeded in photographing Nessi, Tim gave me tremendous support. The fact that I represented the 'paranormal' or 'supernatural' side of the monster-hunting game did not worry him in the slightest... just the opposite in fact.

Tim told me that his mother had been a gifted psychic, and that he had inherited some of her powers. Understandably, he underplayed this aspect of his nature when dealing with some of the more po-faced 'scientific' investigators of the Loch Ness enigma; but the ex-aero-engineer was deeply interested in all kinds of paranormal phenomena. He warned me, on several occasions, about the Loch Ness 'hoodoo' and its jinxing effects. We had both experienced psychic 'backlash' after capturing the serpent-dragon on film. Tim believed

that certain areas of the loch were actually 'cursed', or 'possessed' by malevolent forces.

At the same time, he agreed with my faith in *humour* as an essential weapon in the hunter's armoury. Far too many of today's self-styled cryptozoological 'experts' seem to be utterly humourless; but Tim had a nicely honed sense of fortean fun. He thought of the monsters as *marvellous* things, and so they are.

We will miss Tim Dinsdale. He was a 'character' in the best old-fashioned senses of the word, a mixture of romantic and pragmatist, a truly generous man and a loyal friend. The Loch Ness fraternity will never see his like again, as the 'heroic' period of Loch Ness Monster hunting comes to an end. It is undoubtedly the end of an era.

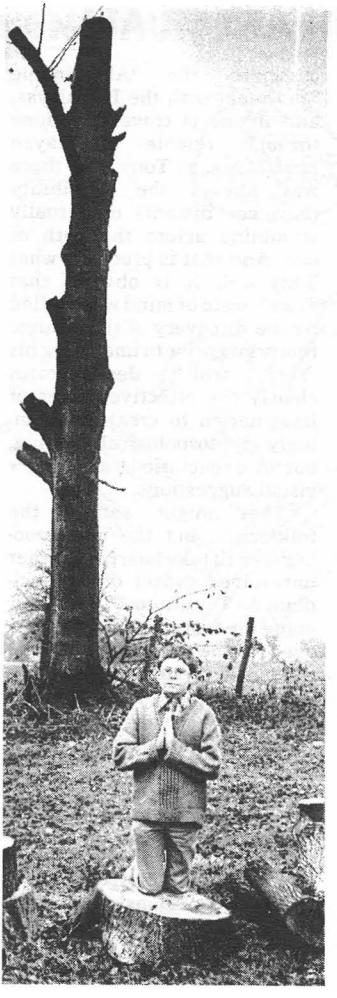
Doc Shiels

THE ECCLES CHEETAH

An animal thought to be a 2ft tall cheetah has been spotted (ahem!) at Eccles in Norfolk. 73 year-old countryman Ron Dye sighted the creature on the evening of 16 June 1987 as he made his way home by the Eccles to Lessingam road.

"It was definitely a cheetah," he said. "It had a cat's head and looked dark brown with dark spots. It stood about 2ft tall and had a thick tail which was about 3ft long. I know all sorts of animals, but this was unnatural. I stayed awake most of the night wondering about it."

Mr Dye's suggestion was that the cat must have escaped from a local wildlife park, but a check made by local journalists revealed that no animals were missing from nearby parks or the travelling circus. Both North Norfolk and Broadlands councils denied that they had issued licences to individuals to keep cheetahs. *Eastern Evening News* 17 June 1987.



ON THE THIRD DAY, IT ROSE AGAIN

Andrew Lambert (13) giving thanks in East Dean churchyard, Sussex, in front of the self–raising lime tree which blew down in the Great Gale of 16 October 1987 (along with millions of others in southern England). "We found it lying completely flat", said Mr Ernest Lambert of the parochial church council. He and two others lopped the 60 foot tree back to about 30 foot, intending to return the next day and finish cutting it up; but they discovered it bolt upright. *Chichester Observer, West Sussex Gazette* 5 Nov 1987. The *Church Times* of 20 Nov: "Tree experts say the parishioners had altered the centre of gravity by removing some of the branches from the top. *Perhaps* that explains it."

ODD BURGLARIES

☛ The house of Ronald Mills in Bath was broken into through a basement door. Nothing was stolen, but the kichen floor was littered with empty dog food cans which had been chopped open with an axe. *D.Mirror* 11 Sept 1987.

☛ A house in Gilroy, California, was broken into. The burglar hung new curtains, made the bed, dumped the trash, did the dishes, stacked newspapers, put away the ironing board and put dirty clothes in a hamper. Nothing was taken except the old curtains. A note was found saying: "Dear Sir, I hope you don't mind. I cleaned your house. Don't worry. I won't take anything because my father is a duke in Spain. Don't worry. I'll clean your house for as long as you live here." It was signed "Prince Eddie." A few days later, it was announced that police would not seek charges against a "mentally disabled youth." *Los Angeles Times* 22 Oct; *Independent* 4 Nov 1987.

JACKPOT FOLLOWS DREAM

Pearl Anderson, 54, a nurse's aide in Oakland, California, had a dream about money gushing from a slot machine, woke up and drove straight to Reno, Nevada, and at 2am went to the slot machines. On her second try at the $3 "millionaire slot machine", five sevens appeared, winning one million dollars. It was the largest payoff for the machine since it was installed three years earlier. St Louis *Post-Dispatch* 3 Sept 1987.

YETI WAS A ROCK AFTER ALL

After all the furore about the 'Yeti' photographs, taken by Tony Wooldridge in the Garhwal Himalayas – see **FT48** pp38–43; and **FT49** p80 'Letters' – the matter has been settled in favour of the sceptics. To be fair, Tony never claimed his photos were evidence of a Yeti, but rather asked for an impartial examination to throw light on his feeling that the entity or object in question was a large unknown anthropoid or something similar.

In 1987, Wooldridge returned to the site and took stereo-photographs of the scene of his 1986 'encounter', and a photogrammetric analysis was made by David Stevens and Ernest Wickens at University College, London, from whose statement to Tony we cite the following essential details. Comparison of the photos from both years revealed that "the object, believed animate, was an outcrop of rock partially covered in snow and resembling an animate form." The object had not moved during Tony's entire 1986 sequence. In the 1987 sequence, the object or formation was buried beneath a layer of snow which had accumulated in the meantime.

A colour photograph of the location, taken in summer and sent to Tony by a local inhabitant, shows the scene covered in vegetation, and in the approximate location of Tony's 'Yeti' is a "conspicuous rock feature... the shape and position [of which]," conclude Stevens and Wickens, "tends to support our view, derived from the photogrammetry, that the 'yeti' was no more than an unfortunate illusion."

Says Tony, "This new evidence is obviously very disappointing. I appear to have jumped to a false conclusion which has taken nearly two years to sort out." We, however, in a positive spirit, feel the case is instructive. There can be few Westerners who cannot freely associate the 'Abominable Snowman' with the Himalayas, and if one is travelling alone through remote Himalayan landscapes, as Tony was, there was always the possibility (however distant) of actually stumbling across the path of one. And that is precisely what Tony did. It is obvious that Tony's state of mind was fuelled by the discovery of the strange footprints prior to imagining his 'Yeti', which demonstrates clearly the effective power of imagination to create a seemingly cryptozoological sighting, out of expectations and a few visual suggestions.

That might satisfy the folklorists; but the cryptozoologists will take heart in another unresolved aspect of the incident. As Tony notes: "Whatever made the footprints and the groove in the avalanche debris remains a mystery... " Whether he is grasping at straws remains to be seen.

Bob Rickard

THE MIRACLE MECHANIC

Oskar Malecki, 25, from a small village near Gdansk in Poland, has been named "Saint Reliant" by his neighbours because he makes house calls in the middle of cold winter nights to jumpstart stalled cars. Said his mother: "My boy has special powers with machines, and although he is a trained mechanic he doesn't even have to open the bonnet. He simply runs his hands over the bodywork and his touch fixes them as if by magic...He repairs church buses for free and never takes money from old people or the poor." Jerzy Palaschek, 24, has known him for 15 years. He said he once saw him tune up four cars one after another by humming like an engine and putting his hands on the bodywork for about 20 seconds. *Celebrity* 5 Nov 1987.

AIDS ITEMS

▼ Many scientists believe that the blood–borne virus HIV originated in African monkeys and somehow switched to humans. It spread slowly and unrecognised in isolated rural areas until it reached the densely–populated cities of central Africa in the mid–70s, and then exploded into today's pandemic. Dr F.Noireau of Brazzaville, Congo, writing in the *Lancet* (26 June 1987), suggested that the virus jumped from monkey to man through the magic rites of the Great Lakes area of central Africa. Monkey blood is innoculated directly into the pubic area, thighs and back to stimulate men and women to intense sexual activity. He said this method of transference was more likely than bites or the eating of monkey meat. *Guardian* 26 June 1987.

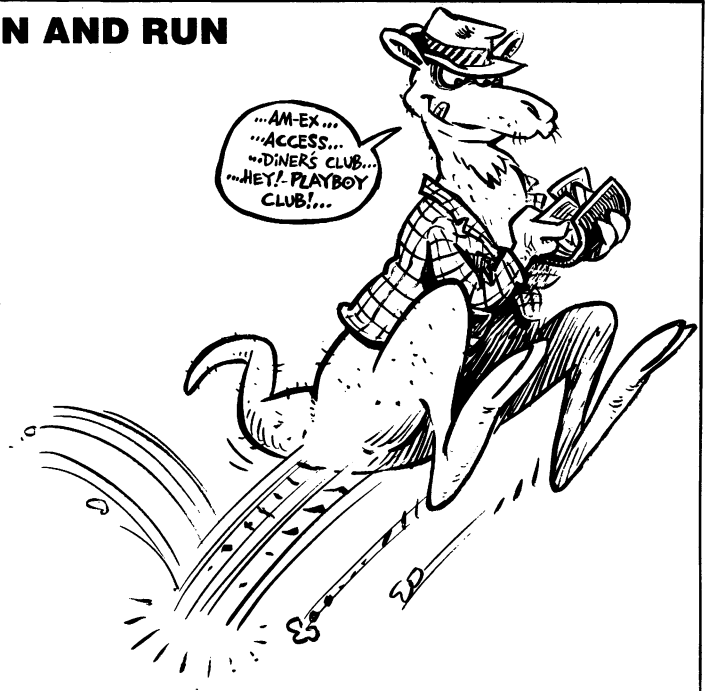
▼ According to *AIDS, Africa and Racism* by Richard and Rosalind Chirimuta, the idea that Africa is poised to be overwhelmed by AIDS is based on errors of data–collection, interpretation and reporting. The spectre of a continent dying of AIDS attributable to its own monkeys and sexual practises is a convenient excuse to overlook the famines and social collapse resulting from 400 years of Western plunder and exploitation.

▼ Tests on carefully–kept blood samples have shown almost conclusively that Robert R., 15, who died in St Louis in 1969, was killed by the AIDS virus. He had never travelled outside the Mid-west. This upsets the widely–held theory that AIDS arrived in America in its present form in the mid–70s. Thus the supposed Father of American AIDS, the promiscuous gay airline steward Gaetan Dugas from Montreal who died in 1984, was apparently pipped to the post. Milwaukee (WI) *Journal* 25 Oct 1987.

THESE WILL RUN AND RUN

■ Assuming that the kangaroo he had knocked over on the road from Perth to Adelaide was dead, Mr Emilio Tarra, a rope–jockey on one of the yachts contesting for the America's Cup, dressed it in his Gucci blazer and was about to take its photograph when the beast recovered, knocked him out with a blow from its tail, and vanished into the bush with his passport, $2,000, and 16 credit cards. *Times* 18 Oct 1986.

■ The car thief's victim couldn't believe his luck. There was the vehicle, returned outside his house with a full tank of petrol and a note which read: "I'm sorry that I borrowed your car. Please accept my invitation to dinner in [such–and–such] restaurant." Finding that a table for four had been paid for in advance, he went with his whole family, and their host even phoned to ask if they were enjoying their meal. They returned home to find that their house in Trevise, Italy, had been cleared of its entire contents, including jewellery and £800 savings. *D.Mail* 22 Sept 1987.



CENTENARIAN NEWS

◆ Mrs Eliza Williams, Britain's oldest inhabitant and 'officially' the world's oldest human, died on 27 December 1987 at the age of 114 years and 209 days (see **FT47**, p54). She had been the record holder since the death of Mamie Keith of Libertyville, Illinois, in September 1986 at the age of 113. Houston *Chronicle, D.Telegraph* 30 Dec 1987.

◆ The title was next taken up by former schoolteacher and suffragette Florence Knapp, born on 10 October 1873, in Montgomery County, about 30 miles from Philadelphia, where she lived all her life. She died 15 days later at the age of 114 years and 93 days. Now the title holder is Maren Torp, 111, of Norway. They all have a long way to catch up with the 'official' champion, Shigechiyo Izumi, who lasted 120 years and 237 days. *D.Record, D.Telegraph, Houston Chronicle, Wolverhampton Express & Star* 13 Jan 1987.

◆ The 1985 census in the Chinese province of Xinjiang Urgur lists 850 centenarians, including four men aged between 125 and 130. Musha Apizi, 116, from the capital, Urumqi (the world's most inland city), discovered two new teeth pushing through his gums on Christmas Day 1987. "I felt something like an itch", he said. "When I took a good look in the mirror I could hardly believe my eyes". He never smokes, drinks, or touches fruit, walks up to three kilometres daily and still hoes his own field. *D.Telegraph* 16 Jan 1988.

◆ Josef Zagoori of Israel celebrated his 120th birthday on 16 July 1987. An angel told him in a dream that he would live to be 146. His recipe for longevity: never go to a doctor, don't smoke or drink, and avoid stress. *D.Mirror* 17 July 1987.

◆ A man of 28 appeared in a South African court after the rape of a woman believed to be 120 years old. *Middlesbrough Eve. Gazette* 24 Sept 1987.

◆ Niljan Bibi, 120, Bangladesh's oldest citizen, was burned to death when his house in Char Kutub, near Dhaka, was put to the torch. Police suggested the attack might be connected to a land dispute between Bibi's son and other villagers. *Guardian* 19 Dec 1987.

A VERY GEOGRAPHICAL DEATH

Honeymoon couple Geoffrey and Rowena Muir, in their early twenties, were killed in their bed in a Rotorua motel in the centre of New Zealand's thermal region. Hydrogen sulphide had seeped through the earth into the shower unit and formed a blanket over the bed area. *Middlesbrough Eve. Gazette* 25 Sep 1987.

MANIC MINER

► The trouble with ghost stories is that they're terminally susceptible to radical re-writing by an especially excitable breed of tabloid reporter. What, for example, are we to make of this gem from *Sun* (9 Oct 1987):

"A coal miner went white and had to be stretchered screaming from his pit yesterday – claiming he had come face to face with a GHOST.

The burly faceworker heard moaning noises in the black depths and turned to see a spook in overalls and a tin hat grinning at him. The phantom suddenly disappeared by gliding through a wall bricking up the old workings.

Colleagues at Cotgrave Colliery, Notts., found the miner – who refuses to be named – a jibbering wreck." And so on.

One is tempted to treat the tale with considerable caution. On this occasion, however, more restrained press coverage suggests that there was actually something in it. British Coal confirmed that the miner (subsequently named as Gary Pine, 19) was found "crying and shaking and in no fit state to carry on work", but pointed out that Cotgrave was a fairly modern colliery and that they had had no other reports of spectral activity. Pine was granted two day's sick leave, however, and miners at the coalface now insist on working in pairs.

Pine's own story went as follows:

"I'd heard groaning noises so I checked to find out if they were coming from the machinery. Then I looked up to see a figure standing there. He was wearing a black helmet and overalls, but had no face.

"I thought it was someone messing about, but then he walked straight through a wall and vanished down a dead end. I just ran and ran. I couldn't even talk." *Sandwell Express & Star + D. Mirror* 13 Oct 1987. The local *Express and Star* gives the date of the occurrence as 7, not 8 October.

► We have a little clumping of similar stories, including one case of a possibly spectral miner seen above ground. In the summer of '84, geography teacher Trevor Ryder of Tavistock was driving home from a cricket match followed by a game of snooker and a pint when he spotted what he thought was a cyclist coming towards him on a one-way street. "I could see the light coming straight at me," he said, "then I realised it was not a bike. It was a miner wearing a helmet with a lamp on the front."

Mr Ryder braked sharply but was unable to stop in time: "There was no way I could miss him. The light vanished, I felt no bump but I was sure I must have hit him." Readers will not be surprised to learn that when the teacher stopped and went back to look for the man there was nothing and no-one to be seen. "At that point," he told the *Western Evening Herald* (24 Aug 84), "I got back into the car pretty quickly and drove home. If it was a ghost then it was the first time I've ever seen one. I'm not fanciful and I certainly didn't imagine it."

Ryder insisted that he was not drunk. Tavistock is certainly an old mining area and, conveniently enough, two buildings nearby were used as lodging houses by miners who walked to and from work in the Tamar Valley mines last century.

► The Welsh mining village of Dylife is home to another paranormal pitman if the tale told by a certain 'Jeff' is to be believed. Jeff, an acquaintance of the *Cambrian News*'s columnist 'Llowarch', makes a hobby of of "poking about in old places", including abandoned mine workings. "Though they're often dark and damp, I don't find them eerie," he asserted in the paper's 14 November 1986 edition.

But as he wandered the tunnels of Dylife, Jeff became aware that he had company: someone (or something?) was quietly humming nearby. He called out, but there was no reply. Reasoning that he might see the other's lamp if he switched off his own torch, Jeff did so momentarily – and glimpsed a figure about ten yards ahead of him.

"It was a white or pale blue shape about the size of a small man," he said later. "It gave off a sort of glow, but not like a torch." The whole figure glowed, Jeff continued, and it seemed to be the source of the mysterious humming sound. Quickly, he switched him light back on – but the figure had vanished. That was enough; the frightened explorer beat a hasty retreat.

Jeff spent the night in a local pub, discussing the mine workings but purposely not mentioning his experience. As the evening ended he was approached by a retired pitman in his late fifties. Odd things happened in that pit, the old miner said. He hadn't wanted to mention it in front of his mates, but... it was true that in his younger days he and his friends had seen lights emerge from the mine level on more than one occasion. These lights, he said, had risen into the air and moved slowly off across the sky. Proponents of the 'Earthlights' hypothesis will like this story.

► In July 1985, Barry Barnett, 29, 'fled sobbing' from Goldthorpe colliery in the South Yorkshire coalfield after seeing a pair of disembodied mining boots coming towards him as he worked underground. *Sun* 9 Oct 87

► Mines do seem to be unusually likely to harbour ghosts – as do pubs, theatres and council houses. There are readily observable clumpings of spooks too. We could tell you

tales of marching legions of martyred monks and sadly abused nuns, and there are enough spectral airmen out there to refight the Battle of Britain. Whatever happened to all the fishwives, computer programmers and plumber's mates of history? Someday we'll take up Steve Moore's suggestion [**FT30** pp.14-17] and do a census of ghosts. But don't hold your breath.

Mike Dash

HOLES IN HEADS

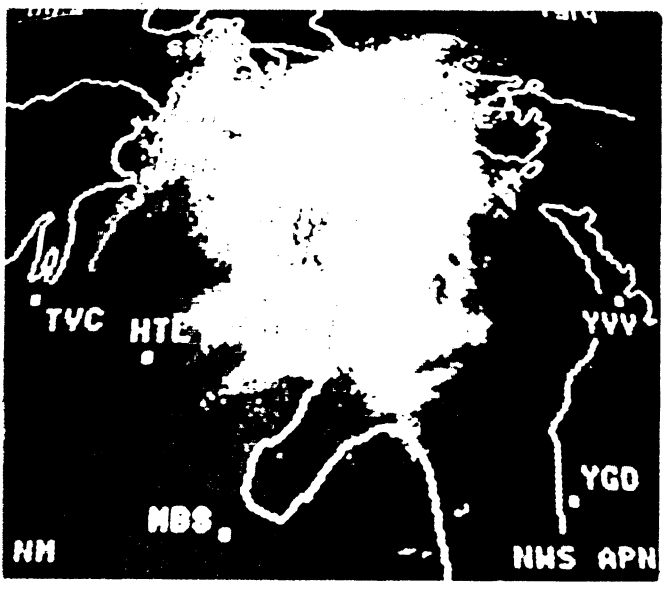
Human beings continue to survive the most horrific head injuries - see **FT38** pp27-30 and **FT39** p28 for some earlier round-ups of this remarkable phenomenon. Two recent examples from the *Daily Telegraph* are well up to standard.

■ James Sexton of California was shot six times in the head and lived to tell the tale. The .22 calibre bullets were fired at him while he slept, probably by his former room mate, police said. One slug is lodged behind the 40 year-old Sexton's eye, but none penetrated the brain. Doctors at Santa Rosa, Calif. said they had no plans to remove any of the bullets. *D.Telegraph* 18 Nov 1987.

■ Stockport DIY enthusiast Robert Holtom speared himself in the temple with a six-inch nail by accidentally treading on a piece of wood he was using to build a garden shed. The plank sprang up and hit him in the face.

Holtom, 28, ran indoors with the nail still embedded in his skull. His wife called an ambulance, but he was unable to get into the vehicle because the wood got in the way. Firemen had to saw through the metal before he could be taken to hospital.

The remainder of the nail was later removed at a Manchester hospital. *D.Telegraph* 12 Jan 1988.



A SCOWLING SNOW STORM

This photo of a snowstorm moving east across Lake Huron was taken during the afternoon of 30 January 1987, by the National Weather Service radar monitor in the weather office at the Phelps–Collins Airport (APN) near Alpina, Michigan. *American Weather Observer* May 1987.

ZOO SUICIDES

▼ A female kangaroo escaped from a zoo in the grounds of Brescia Castle in Italy through a hole in the enclosure and slipped from the ramparts, breaking one of her hind legs. She was later put down by the zoo keepers. The baby she was carrying in her pouch died in the fall. A male kangaroo, showing signs of depression after the death of his wife and child, threw himself over the ramparts the next day, reported the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper on 9 Oct 1987. Victoria (BC) *Times–Colonist* 13 Oct 1987.

▼ A zebra couple tried to escape from Sarajevo Zoo in Yugoslavia, but were foiled by keepers, and the female broke her spine. She later killed herself by smashing her head against the ground. [Tanjug] *Sunday Star* 29 May 1988.

A POSSIBLE SHC

Police in Shalbourne, Wilts., ordered a post mortem examination to be performed on the body of Herman Geerken, 86, after his home help found him "sitting on the sofa with smoke pouring from his body." When she tried to pull him to his feet, he and the sofa burst into flames, reports the *D.Telegraph* (5 Oct 1987).

The incident occurred over the weekend of 3-4 October, said the *Telegraph*. The predictable police response was to suggest that Mr Geerken had suffered a heart attack, dropping his cigarette onto the sofa. Readers who recall supposed instances of the peculiar phenomenon known as Spontaneous Human Combustion will want to reserve judgement on this one. Meanwhile, refer to HANDS ON FIRE, elsewhere in this issue.

THE PAUPER PRINCE

Here's a round-up of recent items of interest culled from our bulging file on revisionist history.

☛ Danish tall-tale teller Hans Christian Andersen – who was, the story goes, the son of a washerwoman and a poor shoemaker – may have been the bastard offspring of Crown Prince Christian and his aristocratic lover Elise Ahlefeldt Laurvig, claims the historian Jens Jorgensen. Oral tradition has it that an illegitimate son was born to Denmark's future king on 2 April 1805 – Anderson's acknowledged birth date – and given to "good people" because the Prince was expected to make a political alliance.

Jorgensen points out that Andersen was not issued with a birth certificate until he was 17, and says he has found evidence in the records of Slagelse high school that the writer's higher-than-usual fees were paid by the royal family. (AP) *St Louis Post-Dispatch* 29 Jul 1987. For more on fairy-tale revisionism, see "The Grimms' fairy tales" in **FT47** p.15.

☛ The tradition that Manhattan Island was sold to the Dutch for $24 worth of beads is a myth, according to US archaeologist Peter Francis Jr. Francis, director of Bead Research Center at Lake Placid (it says here) has spent years researching the story of how Dutchman Peter Minuit was given 22,000 acres of the world's most valuable real estate in exchange for a box full of "beads, buttons and other trinkets". His claim, that the tale was invented by historian Martha Lamb in her 1877 *History of the City of New York,* won him the 1987 Kerr History Prize. UPI wire 9 August 1987.

☛ Divers who approached the *Titanic* in a deep-sea submersible report the presence of an unsuspected hole in her hull, leading to speculation that the liner suffered an explosion as well as encountering an iceberg on that fateful night in April 1912. A French TV programme, cited in (R) *Guardian* 22 Sept 1987, suggested that a bunker fire released gas which ignited in the collision.

☛ Another episode in the Vinland Map Saga (it's a fake – no it isn't – yes it is, etc. – see our Turin Shroud update in **FT47** p10): University of California scientists are claiming that the map – supposedly drawn in the middle ages from observations made by Viking seamen – is not a recent forgery after all.

The parchment chart first turned up in 1957, when Connecticut rare books dealer Laurence C. Wittens 2nd offered it for sale. It was acquired by Yale University in 1960 and published, with extensive scholarly annotations and much fanfare, on Columbus Day 1965. It was then viewed as the most significant existing evidence for a pre-Columbian discovery of America.

Most historians turned against the map in the 1970s, when Dr WC McCrone, a Chicago microscopist, reported that the 29 tiny ink particles he had removed from the parchment contained titanium dioxide, a pigment not refined until 1917. His analysis further suggested that ink which had peeled away from the document did not match exactly the yellow stains underneath – suggesting that it had been used for some other purpose before being acquired by a forger. (McCrone has also branded the Turin Shroud fraudulent, suggesting that the image was painted onto a cloth c.1357 – see HD Sox's *The image on the Shroud* (London 1981) pp153-7 for McCrone's report.)

Re-analysis performed by Thomas Cahill of the Croker Nuclear Laboratory, University of California, has now come up with figures which differ radically from McCrone's. Using a cyclotron, Cahill and his colleagues concluded that the traces of titanium dioxide in the document were tiny – about a thousand times smaller than McCrone had alleged – and in amounts small enough to be both natural and consistent with genuine mediaeval documents.

"Obviously we don't claim the Vinland Map is authentic," Cahill told the *New York Times* (10 May 1987). "All we can say is that McCrone's challenge to its authenticity, based on the finding of titanium in the ink, is completely mistaken... McCrone attempted to extrapolate from too small and too unrepresentative a sample."

Critics of the map still argue that its representation of Greenland is too accurate to be true – it shows the land mass as an island, a fact unknown until much later – and they point out that the Vikings were not mapmakers and navigated by stars rather than by geographic features.

TRAVELLING MEN IN TROUBLE

☛ On 21 November 1987, a wild elephant strayed from a herd in Orissa State, India, knocked schoolteacher Prabhakar Sahu, 45, off his moped, trampled him to death, and sat beside the body until chased back into the forest by police, said the United News of India. *New York Times* 23 Nov 1987.

☛ An elephant infuriated by a blaring car horn chased the vehicle down a hill and trampled its driver to death, Bangladesh police announced. [R] *D.Telegraph* 4 Feb 1988.

☛ On 27 February, police in Nairobi, Kenya, were hunting a hippopotamus that charged out of a sewage tank in which it had been wallowing, and attacked a man on a bicycle, injuring his head, back and thigh before disappearing into a suburb. *S.Mail, News of the World* 28 Feb 1988.

WORLD'S OLDEST BOOMERANG

Paul Valde-Nowak, leader of a Polish archaeological expedition, reported in *Nature* (30 Sep 1987) the discovery of what may be the world's oldest boomerang. 2 feet 4 inches long and half an inch thick, it is carved and polished (excuse the pun) from a woolly mammoth tusk. It was unearthed in fragments by the Krakow Polish Academy of Sciences from Upper Palaeolithic strata 23,000 years old in a cave in Oblazowa Park in southern Poland. Discovered with it was a human thumb bone, believed to be the earliest human remains found in Poland, a pendant made from a snail shell, a wedge made of antler, a necklace of fox teeth and a number of stone tools. The artifacts suggested the cave was inhabited by reindeer hunters who had probably migrated from southwestern Slovakia to the Don river basin. No-one has dared to try out the fragile projectile, although scientists contemplated making a replica to test its aerodynamic capabilities.

Boomerangs have been uncovered on five continents. Gold tipped ones were found in the tomb of Tutankamun. The oldest previously known ones were three wooden specimens found in Wyrie Swamp in South Australia that are believed to be 10,000 years old. *UPI newswire* 30 Sep; New Haven (CT) *Register*, Attleboro (MA) *Sun-Chronicle* 1 Oct 1987.

SHAKY FINANCES

Whittier, California, founded 100 years ago by Quakers, was at the centre of an earthquake on 1 October 1987. The r fell off the sign for the Quaker City Bank in the business district, turning it into the **Quake City Bank**. *New Jersey Record* 4 Oct 1987.

ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUSTBIN

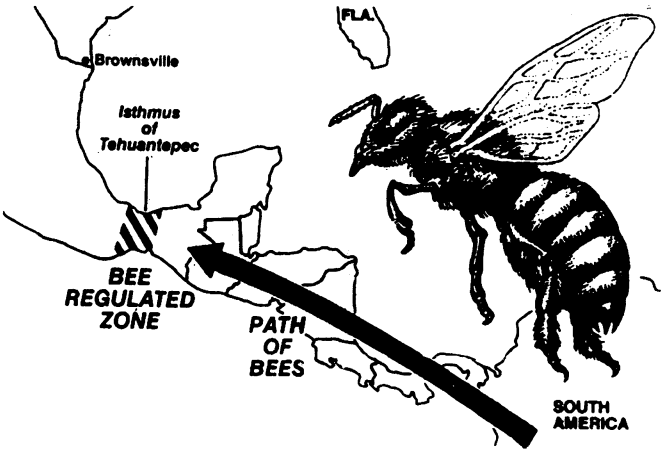
► Whatever happened to Dante Alighieri? Italy's greatest poet died in exile from his native Florence in 1321, leaving instructions that his body and his manuscripts be burned "so that nothing of this heretic remains". But sympathetic monks spirited away his corpse and it was entombed at Ravenna until 1899.

In that year the Florentine authorities asked that the body of their most famous son be returned to the city. There was only one problem – not many remains remained. The few surviving fragments and some dust were sealed into two envelopes and duly sent off to Florence, where they were deposited in a locked desk drawer at the national library there.

A happy ending? Well, not quite. Dante's dust has since gone missing, and a team of librarians has been appointed to track down the envelopes. Many Italians read an ominous significance into the fact that the loss was discovered in 1987, 666 years after the poet's death. More prosaic theorists suggest that Dante has been accidentally thrown out by the cleaners. *Scotsman* 13 May 1987.

► When the body of 13th century pope St Celestine V went missing from the basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio, in L'Aquila, the bells of this central Italian town tolled dolorously. The disappearance of the saint-pope's relics – a near-intact skeleton with a face modelled in wax – from its glass coffin was discovered by a nun. Suspicion quickly fell upon two 'strangers' seen driving a car with false licence plates, who were located and tailed by police. Eventually the remains were recovered from a plywood box stashed in a niche in a cemetary 40 miles away, still wearing mitre and robe and lying on its red velvet cushion. The perpetrators of this sacriledge escaped, "their motive unknown". *Time* 2 May 1988.

► Items of interest sometimes turn up among the many modern equivalents to the mediaeval relics trade – see the UPDATES item for the story of General Peron's hands. Readers are also referred to *The People's Almanac* (New York 1981), a massive tome compiled by the Fortean novelist Irving Wallace: pp.62-8 tells the tale of Steven Levy's 'Search for Einstein's brain'. Part of the errant 2.64lb organ – thoughtfully preserved for posterity by doctors at Princeton hospital, NJ – was tracked down to two jars of preservative kept by Dr Thomas Harvey of Wichita, Kansas in a box labelled 'Costa cider'.



KILLER BEE UPDATE

To recap: killer bees have been a steadily growing problem since 1956, when a variety of African honeybee was crossed with local European honeybees by Dr Walter Kerr at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil in a mistaken effort to improve honey production. A visiting bee keeper accidentally tripped a lever and 26 swarms of the hybrid bees escaped, and quickly began to dominate breeding, reducing honey production and increasing ferocity. They advanced at a rate of 300 miles a year through Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Columbia.

By the summer of 1987, they were advancing through Panama and Honduras. There are now reckoned to be two million swarms; two actually made it to the United States turning up in California and the snowbound New York state border. Up to 500 people have been stung to death. In Columbia they attacked a school killing one child and sending dozens to hospital. Farmers reported cattle stampeding in terror, and the finding of horse carcases stung a million times and bloated beyond recognition.

Now, the United States and Mexico are preparing to pump over three million dollars a year into an agricultural Maginot line to be drawn across the 125–mile–wide Isthmus of Tehuantepec, north of the Guatamalan border. In a 'regulated zone' 100 miles deep, traps will be laid filled with the artificial scent of queen bees, and all swarms will be destroyed. Trucks are to be sprayed at border crossings and bounties offered for the detection of swarms. Breeders also hope to overwhelm the insects with the genes of the tamer European bees. Africanised queens will be trapped and replaced with European queens, new hive boxes will be 'pre–queened' with European queens, and Africanised swarms will be infiltrated with European drones. Research is being done on the use of radar to track swarms up to half a mile away. Sceptics doubt that the scheme will work.

At stake is not only the $150 million–a–year US honey business, but also about $20 billion–a– year of crops dependent on pollination. The Californian almond crop is totally dependent on bees, as are the melon and squash crops and most fruit and nut crops nationwide. *Wall Street Journal* 29 May; *D.Telegraph* 6 Aug; *D.Mail* 10 Aug 1987.

▼ As a further threat to the US honey and fruit industries, a bee–killing mite from Indonesia has invaded. First detected in September 1987 in Wisconsin, by January 1988 it was found in 10 other states, and could soon infect 90% of the nation's honey bees. If only there was some way of diverting the mites to southern Mexico... *D.Mail* 28 Jan 1988.

Paul Sieveking

NOAH HAD IT EASY

With two months still to go, the town of Yakutat in Alaska had had 199.55 inches (i.e. over 16 *feet*) of rain in 1987. Ducks were taking shelter and a joke was current about seeing an old man walking about with animals in pairs. In September and October alone, over 8 feet of rain had fallen (48.34 inches and 48.81 inches), on 54 days and nights. The town sits on gravel, so there had been no flooding. Meanwhile, the Pacific Northwest was experiencing its worst drought in half a century. John Cunningham, Yakutat's meteorologist for the previous 3 years, was escaping to Florida and the Bahamas for 2 months, before anyone found out that during his previous tour of duty in the town – in 1965 – the just–broken annual rainfall record was set. *Sunday World-Herald 1 Nov 1987.*

HEAVY WEATHER

The blurb for a lecture by Professor Stanley Gregory for the Royal Geographical Society in Bradford in February on *Droughts and Rainfall Effects* included the following: "Using examples of extreme drought in Australia and the monsoon in India, Prof Gregory shows how important rainfall deficits are in causing droughts." *D.Telegraph* 14 Jan 1988.

MONSTER STURGEON

A 900lb sturgeon 11 feet long was found dead in Lake Washington, Seattle, on 5 November 1987. The monstrous fish was believed to be over eighty years old and may have died of old age, according to Washington state fisheries official Tony Floor.

Tales of a gigantic duck-eating monster had circulated at the lake for a number of years.

Sturgeon specialist Gail Kreitman told journalists that fish of this breed can live to be 100 and grow to be more than 20 feet long. Some specimens have weighed more than one ton, she said, but no sturgeon is capable of eating ducks.

See also **FT43** p.7 and **FT46** p28. One rather wonders how many other lake monsters have been built upon monstrous fish. Albuquerque (NM) *Journal* + (AP) Orange County (CA) *Register* 7 Nov 1987.

PERVERTED CLOWNS

◆ Circus clown Brian Ward, 38, from Norfolk, was jailed for 4 years for sexual attacks on boys he enticed to his caravan. *D.Telegraph* 30 April 1987.

◆ A group of clowns enticed and drove away 70 children aged 3 to 6 from schools and kindergartens in Oude Pekela in Holland, near the German border. They were too scared to talk when they returned, but one mother found her daughter's body covered in cigarette burns. Police feared that the children's ordeals may have been filmed for porn movies: some of the children said: "We've been on TV!" *D.Express*, *D.Mirror* 11 June 1987.

◆ Melvin F.Caramo, 30, a native of Honduras, known to children as "Mantequilla the Clown", was arrested for sexually abusing 31 children around New Orleans, in Beaumont TX., Montgomery AL., and in Monterrey, Mexico. Most of the victims were Hispanic, ranging in age from 5 to 15. He kept a portfolio of almost 200 children's pictures that dated back several years. Beaumont *Enterprise* 14 July; Houston *Chronicle* 15 July 1987.

WONDER BIRTHS

■ Orit Kikashvili, a 26–year–old Israeli woman, gave birth to a boy five months after being declared clinically dead. [R] *D.Telegraph* 18 Sept. 1987.

■ Danny Berg, a 34–year–old woman from Rome, gave birth to twins 38 days apart. She had had two miscarriages, and after hormone treatment, gave birth to Diana normally in mid–December 1987. At the end of January 1988, she was still carrying Monica, and doctors decided to perform a Caesarian. *Eve. Standard* 2 Feb 1988.

NOT THEIR DAY

◆ Ianni and Anna Deluca had to scrimp for 30 years to pay the mortgage on their house in suburban Milan. After the last payment they held a party and threw the morgage papers on the fire, which then got out of control and burnt the house down. There was no insurance: that had been sacrificed to meet all those payments. *S.Express* 13 Dec 1987.

◆ Jacques Boufell decided to burn mosquitoes out of his house in France with a flamethrower. A gas explosion put him in hospital, knocked down the house...and killed all the mosquitoes. *D.Mirror* 23 Sept 1987.

◆ Amy Beth Champion, 23, ran from a restaurant in Boulder, CO, where she was drinking with her boyfriend Mark Ingham, 30, and his father Hepburn, 51. Mark and his father were looking for her on a dark, rainy road when their car ran her over and killed her. "God only knows why she lay down in the road", said a police captain Bruce Goodman (age not given). *NY Daily News* 27 Aug 1987.

◆ Bill Helko, 38, from Newcastle, was over the moon when he got the winning number in a Californian lottery – the first prize was £412,000. He ordered a Porsche, booked a family holiday in Hawaii and had a champagne dinner with his wife and friends at a swish Hollywood restaurant. When he went to collect his winnings he found that 9,097 others had also won first prize, and his share of the jackpot was £45. *D.Mirror* 23 Mar 1987.

◆ The US Federal Fish and Wildlife Service dropped 48,000 poison pellets on Kiska Island in Alaska to save the endangered Aleutian strain of Canada geese by wiping out their main enemy: the Arctic fox introduced by Russian traders in 1836. The foxes vanished; but the geese are no safer. Now they are threatened by Norwegian rats that came to the island on ships during the last war. The foxes used to keep the rat population down. Now they can thrive, and one of their favour tit–bits is goose eggs. *S.Express* 28 June 1987.

◆ Arriving at Wangaratta airstrip to open the local vintage aircraft exhibition, Mr Humphrey Cain, President of the Folklore Society of Australia, found he could not make his speech heard above the noise of a Dragweave Triplane whose engine was jammed at ON. As he was being moved to a "quiet corner", a DIY early French microlite took off and crashed the stepladder he was meant to speak from. As he was making his way back to the refreshment tent, Mrs Margaret McCracken, an 83–year–old amateur parachutist, landed on his head. Interviewed at his bedside in Wangaratta Hospital, Mr Caine [sic] said: "Nothing is more precious than our cultural heritage." *Melbourne Age* 16 Dec 1985.

AND DON'T DILLY–DALAI

The story of a wildly inappropriate Holygram appeared in the *Daily Mirror* of 13 Nov 1987. Trouble flared when British fire-eater Kris Tait took to the streets of the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, wearing her favourite 'Sergeant Bilko' T-shirt. The distinctive features of veteran actor Phil Silvers are instantly recognisable to most Westerners – not so to the average Tibetan with his limited exposure to American TV. Passers-by took the picture of a balding, bespectacled man to be a caricature of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled religious leader, and crowded round to express their anger at this apparent mark of disrespect.

"I thought they were going to kill me," Ms Tait revealed later. She was rescued by a Chinese soldier who arrested her, confiscated her passport and frog-marched her back to her hotel. Shaken, she left the country next day.

A strange resemblance? The Bilko T-shirt, as sported by Kris Tait **[on the left]**, and the Dalai Lama **[on the right – or is it the other way around?]**

BIT PART

Central TV chose an 11–year–old actor to star in a childrens' series called *Woof*, about a boy who turns into a dog. His name was Edward Fido. *D.Telegraph* 26 Jan 1988.

FISHY YARNS

▼ Angler Colin Jacobs, 19, of Kessingland, Suffolk, tossed a message in a bottle into the North Sea – and it ended up in a shark's stomach at a street market in Ruanda in central Africa, according to a letter which he received. A fishing expert said: "The shark was probably caught in the Med and taken overland." *News of the World* 9 Aug 1987.

▼ This one sounds like foaflore to me. A biology student, out fishing with three friends off the coast of Mexico, caught a shark. Cutting it open he discovered his stolen gold Rolex wristwatch on a man's severed arm. Police took fingerprints in a bid to identify the thief. *Celebrity* 12 Nov 1987.

▼ A Soviet hunter took aim at a duck but landed a falling pike, according to Tass on 17 September 1987. The pike apparently caught the duck to eat but when the bird gained height the fish had to let go. [R] *Guardian* 18 Sep 1987.

▼ On 8 October 1987, Moscow radio reported that a fisherman's dog disappeared while swimming across the Pechora river in northern Siberia. Moments later the fisherman cast his net and hauled in a massive pike, 5 foot 8 inches long weighing 114.6 pounds with a tail sticking out of its jaws. He cut it open and his dog struggled out, barking and appartently none the worse for its experience. [R] *Sandwell Express & Star, Aberdeen Press & Journal* and most national dailies 9 Oct 1987.

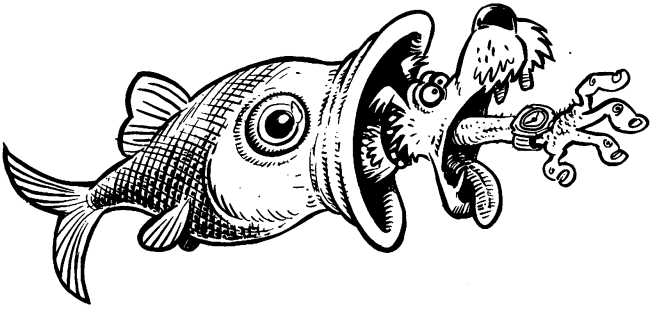
▼ Bob Skinner has sent us two historical accounts of similar occurrences: The first was published in *The New Wonderful Magazine & Marvellous Chronicle* (Jan 1793), probably reprinted from an issue of the earlier *Wonderful Magazine* of 1764-65:

Remarkable Relation of a DOG SWALLOWED by an EEL. A Gentleman in the province of Leinster in Ireland, in December 1749, fired at a duck on a lake that was frozen over; the duck being only wounded, dived under the ice, the gentleman's dog following her, but not returning, he went home. In the month of February following, a fisherman having caught a prodigious large eel, many people went to see it, and among the rest, the above gentleman. The fisherman agreed to open the eel, when to the surprise of all the spectators out jumped poor Tray, the gentleman's dog, and ran fawning to his master brisk and lively, but greatly emaciated, from remaining so long in the eel's belly.

▼ The second account is a letter to the editor of the *Wonderful Magazine* (Jan 1765) from a correspondent in Birmingham on 17 January:

Another story of this kind I have heard told by the late ingenious Mr S----k, organ builder in Warwick, a man whose veracity I never heard called in question.

Mr S----k was one day going to dine with J----s N----m, Esq; and a famous pointer dog of his, happening to follow him, made a stop by the side of the river Avon, as he was walking by it: Mr S----k came up, and was greatly surprised to see that his dog had had a point at a very large pike, which he, having a wire in his pocket, put round his head, and caught, and took with him to Mr N----m's, who ordered him for dinner. Mr S----k observing the pike to be very full in the belly, had the curiosity to go into the kitchen to see him opened; when, to his great surprise, a brace of partridges flew out of him, which made Mr S----k easily account for the dog's standing at the pike.



INSTANT HEAT WAVE

On the morning of 7 July 1987, temperatures in Greensburg, Kansas, rose 20 degrees in just 10 minutes. At 7.30am it was 75 degrees, and at about 7.40 it was 95 degrees. It felt as if an oven door had been opened, said Bill Ellis, a volunteer observer for the National Weather Service. Just south in Sun City, the rise was 17 degrees in 15 minutes, and in Pratt to the east it was 10 degrees up in the same period. The temperature in Greensburg gradually began falling until at 10.30am it was down to 77 degrees.

John May, National Weather Service meteorologist at Topeka, had never heard of such a phenomenon, but speculated that the normal layer of cool air that develops overnight close to the ground simply switched places with much warmer air thousands of feet up. "We're not sure why this happens" he said. (This probably means they haven't a clue). *UPI newswire* 7 July 1987.

NONDESCRIPT PIG

■ This monster **[left]**, called 'Rinaelcomen', was one of 13 piglets, the others normal, born in Novo Iguacu, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro, on 14 January 1988. It had the trunk of an elephant, the horn and teeth of a rhino, human ears, facial structure and eyes of a monkey and the body of a pig. It died after two hours. Antonio Francisco Correia, 62, the pig owner, said he had never had any abnormal pigs before. *Ultima Dia* (Rio de Janeiro) 15 Jan 1988.

■ A rather more normal pig prodigy, with six legs, was born on 19 December 1987, among a litter of 16 in Bristolville, Ohio. [AP] Asbury Park *Press* 24 Dec; *NY Daily News* 25 Dec 1987.

MOUSTACHE KING MURDERED

Karna Ram Bheel (born 1928) had the longest moustache in the world, 7ft 10ins from tip to tip, which he had been growing since 1949. In Feb 1979 he was given permission by a New Delhi prison governor to keep it uncut during his life sentence (crime unspecified), according to the *Guinness Book of Records*. He was famous through tourist films and posters. At the beginning of 1988, his headless body was found in a cart near his home in the west Rajasthan city of Jaisalmer in India. *Middlesbrough Eve. Gazette* 4 Jan; *Guardian* 5 Jan 1988.

THE DEVIL IN DAVIDSTOWN

It used to be only Kilroy whom you had to worry about when you visited a public lavatory. And for all we know, that ubiquitous character may have been to blame for the curious if not over-credible report that oc-

cupied the front page of the Irish *Echo & South Leinster Advertiser* of 18 September 1987.

Locals suspected quite a different folk-devil. According to the permissibly-sceptical author of the *Echo*'s piece, journalists had rushed to the parish of Davidstown, near Waterford, eager to interview "a gentleman with a worldwide reputation since the dawn of civilisation" after he had allegedly dropped into a local hostelry where "his conviviality was not appreciated".

The probe met something along the lines of a conspiracy of silence, not to mention a solicitor (acting on behalf of the publican) whose main topic of conversation was the High Court injunction he would bring against the paper if it published a word of the story. Nevertheless the journalists did trace somebody who'd been present when Michael Kennedy of Craan, Bree had stepped out of the bar and into the Gents. And despite the informant's assertion that he "does not believe in this kind of thing", they established from him that Kennedy had emerged after "a most ferocious rumpus" in frenzied state, claiming to have seen the Devil "in full regalia".

Michael K. wasn't available for comment, but his father Jim *was*. He criticised the reports as "grossly exaggerated" (*sic*) and said that his son had been suffering from worm-fever (*sic.*, sick). Having received a cure from Mrs O'Brien of Ballymackessy, the lad would be turning out for Bree United the next Sunday. Other young men in the locality had met the lucerific being, added Mr Kennedy – one while driving home from a darts match. Beelzebub himself had materialised unannounced on the back seat of the vehicle and in Mr Kennedy's view had taken a lot out of the driver. Yes, it was worm-fever again – and Mrs O'Brien had supplied a cure for *that* case as well.

At this point another informant who "happened by" opined that such things were only to be expected. Hadn't they dug up all the fairy raths and "auld people's bones" to make way for the Cloney Park housing estate? "You can't do those kind of things and expect to get away with it," he concluded.

We would dearly like to know more about the Davidstown worm-fever (but note that if you get it you'd better contact Mrs O'Brien of Ballymackessy). In dearth of that information, though, the *Echo*'s statement that – sceptics and blithe spirits aside – these rumoured occurrences were accompanied by widespread disinclination to talk doesn't lack interest.

If this is more than journalistic inference, there could be cause to interpret the tales as 'folkified' reactions to local tension. The passer-by's apparently firm belief that the events were a response to the desecration of tradition (and/or the ancient burial site, confirmed by the National Museum to have existed where Cloney Park now stands) may indicate a general criticism of modern trends, wherein old values are rejected or afforded insufficient respect.

That the supernatural visitant takes the form of His Satanic Majesty is in keeping with the belief that abandonment of consensus values is a way of invoking the Devil, heavenly wrath, or both at the same time; he performs much the same role in the urban legend categorised by Brunvand, Smith and others as 'The Devil in the dance-hall' (or 'Disco'). And of course he is a very adaptable being. The token Phantom Hitch-Hiker element – introduced here somewhat casually – displays a fairly common confusion or amalgam: the Supernatural Visitant as Devil or Travelling Companion, swapping identities without damage to either. Cultures or communities are known to employ particular legends or variants of legends as a legitimate means of expressing discontent, uncertainty and downright fear. Worm-fever may not be confined to the parish of Davidstown.

Michael Goss

FRENCH VANISHINGS

■ Alex Pitcher, a young British caver, disappeared in peculiar circumstances in the Gouffre Berger (above Grenoble) on or about 7 August 1987. The Gouffre is a 1200-metre-deep pothole with a formidable reputation among cavers, but it is not renowned for being particularly dangerous or difficult to navigate.

A long and well-researched story in the *Sunday Times Magazine* (14 Feb 1988) gives the following details: Pitcher, a 17 year old Derbyshire schoolboy, was a good mountaineer but an inexperienced potholer; the trip to the Gouffre Berger was his first major expedition underground, and he went accompanied by a more experienced neighbour, a teacher named Chris Heard. But the older man had torn the ligaments in one knee some weeks earlier and when they reached the site he found two other cavers – Steve Marriott, a youth worker in his 30s and Phil Goodwin, a lecturer in his early fourties – to look after the boy.

Pitcher was impatient to go into the Gouffre and begin the 1100m descent to the furthest negotiable reaches of the cave. The hazardous round trip was expected to take almost three days, but things had been made easier during the several days of preparation by a team of senior potholers who had fully rigged the cave with ropes and other climbing aids. Pitcher, however, was unhappy with the caution displayed by Marriott and Goodwin, and when the latter was held up at an abseil known as the Holiday Slides, Alex went on alone into a narrow section of the cave called the Meanders. He was properly equipped and was wearing a wetsuit, but was never, as they say, seen again.

From the Meanders the Gouffre Berger opens up again, leading to a lengthy abseil, Aldo's, and then a 400m long chamber with a 60m ceiling called the Great Gallery of the Starless River. From there the passageway descends past the Great Rubble Heap to Camp One – where the trio had arranged to spend the night – and thence into another vast gallery known as the Salle de Treize. Had Alex ventured into this chamber, says Marriott, he must have realised that he had gone too far and turned back. There were, in addition, two other cavers returning up the canal below the Salle de Treize. Pitcher could not have passed them without being seen.

When Marriott and Goodwin reached Camp One they were surprised not to find their companion waiting for them. After waiting for almost five hours, the two men assumed that Pitcher must have lost his light and be waiting for assistance. They set off to search for the missing boy, but – to their perplexity – found no sign of him. The pair climbed Aldo's and searched the crevices of the Meanders, half-expecting to find Alex lying injured or unconscious, before returning to the surface a full day after they had gone into the cave. The men left by the entrance had not seen Pitcher either.

The remaining members of the team began to search again, and the cave rescue service – led by local man Albert Oyhancabal – was mobilised to help. The whole system was searched rigorously for almost a week. It was thought possible that the 17-year-old had taken a wrong turning at the entrance of the Great Gallery of the Starless River, where two subsidiary chambers – the Mud Gallery and Petzl's Gallery – branch off from the normal route. But no trace of the caver was to be found in them, nor was there any evidence of a fresh fall of rock or mud which could have buried Alex Pitcher.

"It surpassed logic," admits Oyhancabal. "It was an absolute enigma."

Caving is a dangerous sport and deaths are not unknown, but disappearances are practically unheard of. The Gouffre Berger is a finite system and there is no part of it which has not been searched perhaps a half-dozen times. On the assumption that Alex might somehow have missed his companions (perhaps by venturing inadvertently into one of the side chambers) and then returned to the surface after they had passed, Oyhancabal set hundreds of soldiers and emergency workers to searching the deeply-crevissed surrounding coutryside with the help of dogs, helicopters and infra-red heat-seeking devices. They found nothing – no clothing, no equipment and no body.

"Nothing made sense," Steve Marriott concedes. "It seemed he had vanished off the face of the earth."

There is little to suggest what may have happened to Alex Pitcher, but the evidence suggests that the story's principals gradually convinced themselves that no 'natural' explanation was likely to be found. Chris Heard, who had waited by the entrance to the Gouffre throughout the first day of the search, recounted an eerie experience to the *Sunday Times*: that he had woken at 4.17am on Sunday 9 August with the certainty that Alex was now dead. The boy's mother says the same revelation came to her almost simultaneously, at about 4am that morning.

If Pitcher *is* dead, what became of his body? It seems safe to assume that it is no longer in the Gouffre Berger. The idea that the missing caver found his way back to the surface, somehow missed the two potholers who had pitched a tent close by the entrance, and headed off into the surrounding *lapiaz* – only to fall into some crevice – is superficially attractive. But it requires the assumption that the youth was in some respect unbalanced, for there was no

obvious reason for him to behave in such a way.

The thing is certainly a mystery. And it is not surprising that ghost stories have started coming out of the Gouffre Berger: late in October 1987 two British cavers were struggling back to the surface of the cave. One, more exhausted than the other, had fallen behind but was encouraged by a figure wearing a wetsuit who called encouragement and shone a light down from above. When the man reached the entrance to the system he thanked his partner for his help. "What do you mean?" replied the second caver, who was not wearing a wetsuit.

One thinks, too, of Richard Shaver's ramblings about the Dero (**DE**trimental **RO**bots) – subterranean remnants of a Lemurian super-race given to kidnapping unwary humans for their own unsavoury purposes. Try Warren Smith's *This hollow Earth* (Sphere 1982) pp.129-43 for a particularly lurid summary of Shaver's stories.

■ Also in August 1987 (note the coincidence of date), 21 year-old Guy Antoniak became the ninth young man to vanish in a six square-mile patch of marshland on the river Marne. Antoniak, one of 10,000 recruits doing national service in the area, failed to return home after going on leave in July. The three military camps in the area – near Mourmelon in the Rheims district – contain the highest concentration of national servicemen anywhere in France.

The French authorities' reasons for presuming he had gone missing in the marshland area were not explained in our source, the *Guardian* of 15 Aug 1987, but the official line was that he had deserted.

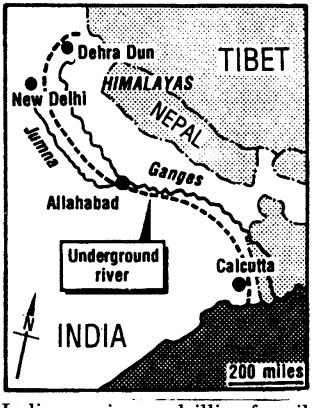
Seven other national servicemen and one civilian have vanished from camps in the Mourmelon area since 1980. In each case the missing person was last seen heading for the marshy area, which is bounded by three minor roads – leading inevitably to press interest in a French 'Bermuda Triangle'.

A fine-sounding body of local folklore is already building up around the case. Some blame the disappearances on a sex maniac, others say the men were kidnapped by a 'hermit legionnaire' hiding out in the flat wasteland. Another theory suggests that the soldiers have been conscripted into a male vice ring.

Local police admit their bafflement: "There is definitely a mystery here which we haven't managed to clear up," said one spokesman. Additional source: *Evening News* for 12 or 19 Aug 1987.

Mike Dash

RIVER RUNS DEEP



Indian engineers drilling for oil in the Shivalik Hills near Dehra Dun on the Tibeto–Indian border have discovered the underground river Saraswati which is part of Hindu mythology and is supposed to have disappeared in the mountains thousands of years ago. It was said to join the Ganga (Ganges) and Yamuna (Jumna) below the holy city of Allahabad (the ancient Prayag), where millions of devout Hindus celebrate Kumbh Mela by immersing themselves. The Saraswati is referred to as "gupt" (unseen). In Hindu symbolism, Ganga is the river of Siva and our left-hand side, Yumuna is the river of Vishnu and our right-hand side, and Saraswati is the river of awareness and our spine.

During the Kumbh Mela in January 1977, I was at the Sangam where the three rivers supposedly meet. It was said to be the most auspicious time for 1,500 years, and possibly the largest temporary gathering of humanity in history – about 19 million people. I was told that the Saraswati rose nearby under Akbar's Fort in Allahabad. I still have a bottle of water scooped up at dawn on 21 January 1977 – which remained clear for 8 years.

Archaeologists have long accepted that the Saraswati existed for centuries before inexplicably vanishing. It left once–fertile lands barren which became the Great Thar desert. The discovery of the enormous water reservoir has been welcomed by the Government struggling against the country's worst drought for a century. The water could solve most of northern India's irrigation problems for the century to come.

This is the second time that Hindu folklore has predicted the location of hidden water. Several years ago exploratory drillings for oil at Jaisalmer in the Rajasthan desert turned up an underground lake 9,000 feet below the surface at a spot where the god Krishna is supposed once to have bored a great well, thousands of feet deep, for the people of a drought–stricken village. Report by Balram Tandon in New Delhi for the *D.Telegraph* 16 Jan 1988.

Paul Sieveking

MASS HYPNOTISM

A shop owner and 20 customers in Sciacca, Sicily, were put into a trance by two Indians who stared into their eyes and gesticulated, before raiding the till. London *Eve. Standard* 9 Dec 1987.

KAMCHATKA BEAR HUNT

Russian cryptozoologists are preparing an expedition to search for a bizarre one-ton "bear" reported from Kamchatka in the extreme north-east of the USSR.

Local reindeer-breeders have claimed several recent sightings of a giant animal they call the Irkuiem, said the Soviet daily *Pravda* (29 Sept 1987), cited by UPI. They describe the beast as a huge, white "polar bear-like animal", much bigger than the largest known specimens of the Kodiak bear, and have provided zoologist Rodin Sivolobov (the expedition leader) with a skin they claim came from an Irkuiem. Scientists say that without skull or teeth they cannot be sure the pelt does not come from a regular but oversized polar bear.

Interestingly enough, Kamchatka is also home to the world's largest land carnivore, the 10ft, 1,600 pound great brown bear *Ursus beringianus* – a cryptozoological Hall-of-Famer which came to the notice of science as late as 1898. But the thing we find particularly interesting about this story is the outlandish description of the creature, which hardly matches our own photofit conception of what a bear should look like. Kamchatkan locals say the Irkuiem cannot run, but "moves like a caterpillar", putting out its forelegs and then pulling up its hind limbs. It has a very small head, they say, and a long narrow body. **FT** readers may remember that the "animals" which sparked off recent bear-scares in Britain and the USA were similarly not-quite-right: see "Talking bear" in **FT45** p.34 and **FT46** p.15, and our summary of the Hackney bear hunt [**FT37** pp.44-46].

The Irkuiem may be new to the "Out of Place" scene – it doesn't appear in the ISC's "Annotated checklist of apparently unknown animals with which Cryptozoology is concerned" [*Cryptozoology* vol.5 pp.1-26] – unless it's the same beast as the almost-unknown Farlane's bear (*Vetularctos inopinatus*) of Canada's Northwest Territories. Some say it's only a legend, but Sovient biologist Nikolai Vereschagin told *Pravda:* "I do not exclude the existence on this planet of a new, eighth type of bear." His hypothesis is that the Irkuiem is a successor to *Arctodus*, which established wisdom suggests died out some 10,000 years ago. Let's hope we hear more of Sivolobov's expedition.

News just in: the Soviet Ministry of Culture has recently established a Cryptozoological Society. One early member is manimals researcher Zhanna Kofman of Moscow, who has collected nearly 100 sightings of "Yeti-like" creatures in the USSR. (R) *S.Times* 10 Jan 1988.

UPDATES

☛ "Voodoo priestess" Alice Lakwena – last heard of in **FT49** pp.28-9 as she escaped through the Ugandan swamps on a bicycle after the collapse of her 1987 rebellion – was arrested by security forces as she crossed the Kenya-Uganda border on 26 December, the news agency KNA reported at the end of the month. Lakwena, 27, and her remaining seven followers were jailed by the local court at Kapenguria in SW Kenya. The priestess will be handed over to the Ugandan government after serving her four-month sentence for illegal entry. (R) Aberdeen *Press & Journal, Independent* 31 Dec 1987.

☛ One more mystery cleared up: Geoffrey Quentin Hubbard – son of Scientology guru L.Ron Hubbard – almost certainly committed suicide, reports Russell Miller in his new biography *Bare-faced Messiah* (reviewed this issue). Geoffrey (who had attempted suicide on at least one previous occasion) was found on 28 October 1976 in a car sealed with tissue paper stuffed into the cracks around the windows. A vacuum cleaner hose led from the exhaust into the car. He was unconscious and died two weeks later. A cryptic newspaper article led us to report this as a Strange Death in **FT21** p11.

☛ A footnote – no, make that a "handnote" – to our coverage of the Colossus of Rhodes fiasco [**FT49** pp.22-3]: While Greek government ministers squabbled over a hand-shaped lump of rock, the Argentinian authorities were busy investigating the dismemberment of former dictator Gen. Juan Peron. In late June/early July 1987 someone broke into the dead general's casket at Chacarita cemetery, Buenos Aires and removed both hands, which were severed at what remained of the wrists.

We had this down as a possible occult crime, noting that the coffin was covered by a 350lb glass lid secured by 12 triple combination locks, all of which were still intact when the loss was discovered. However further clippings report that a ransom note demanding £5m. for the safe return of Peron's missing members was subsequently issued. Suspects included right-wing intelligence officers; Peronist party leader Antonio Cafiera denounced the theft as "simply macabre. Instead of being politically inspired, it seems to be an expression of insanity... It's the work of psychopaths."

Oddly enough, the corpse of Peron's famous wife Eva (aka. "Evita") was stolen in 1955, three years after the general was overthrown. It reappeared later in Italy. File under "synchronicity". *D.Express* 3 Jul; *Independent* 4 Jul 1987.

HORSE SENSE

A horse bolted and galloped through Fakenham, Norfolk, ending up in a pub called the Rampant Horse. *The News* (Portsmouth) 31 Dec 1987.

BARKING MAD AND HISSING FIT

▼ Neighbours of Amela Lafeye, 67, in Dijon, France, brought her to the attention of the authorities after she was seen growling and hissing at a cat on her window ledge, which was growling and hissing back. Police found her on all fours. "She backed up and began hissing at us when she saw us" said an officer. "She has obviously gone mad from years of being deprived and alone, and living on a diet meant for animals", said psychiatrist Dr Maurice Claren. "She apparently started eating it when her cat died, and since she was very poor it eventually became her regular diet. Of course it was not the cat food that made her behave this way. She has severe psychiatric problems." *Celebrity* 15 Oct 1987.

▼ A Sardinian farmer, Antonio Angius, 57, kidnapped Pasquale Mereu, 47, and held him captive for 15 years, working him as a sheepdog. He wore ragged canvas clothing, was fed on cheese and had to spend virtually 24 hours a day with 50 of the flock of 400 sheep. He was freed after villagers found him crawling on all fours, barking at sheep, and spent his first night in a bed for 15 years. *D.Mirror* 7 Dec 1987; *Sun* (USA) 26 Jan 1988.

▼ On 12 May 1986, Anthony Smyth, 33, of Peckham, South London, was seen eating daffodils, barking and chasing ducks with his pet terrier in London's St James's Park before barking at a party of Streatham schoolchildren, grabbing the bottom of a parent, Mrs Teresa Hawkins, and lunging at a teacher's thigh. He was arrested, and bit three policemen at Rochester Row police station. One needed an anti–tetanus jab for a serious bite on the leg after Smyth tore through his trousers. On 26 January 1988, he was cleared of indecent assault and actual bodily harm, but was remanded in custody on other, unrelated charges. *Guardian, D.Mirror, D.Mail, Sun, Today* 23 Jan; *D.Telegraph, D.Mirror* 27 Jan 1988. See also 'Policemen bitten by weird dog–man', in **FT36** p61.

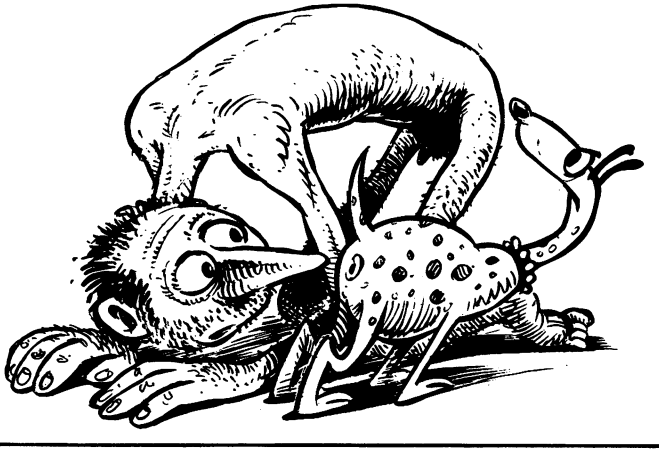
▼ Dr Kumar Varyani, who had been a physics lecturer in Allahabad, India, for 14 years, was taking part in a panel discussion of Einstein's theories. Among the guests was an Indian holy man called Vishisa Kothari. When Varyani called his beliefs "an Einsteinian nightmare – stupid, antiquated and odd", he jumped from his seat, pointed at Varyani and whispered: "My ideas may be silly but you have no ideas at all. In fact, you are a dog." Varyani began to pant and bark as the crowd of more than 200 watched. He was led away on all fours by his weeping wife Vevendra. Since then, she has had to prevent him chasing cats, howling and straying from home. He washes by licking his hand and rubbing his face. Psychiatric treatment and post–hypnotic suggestion have been ineffective. Mrs Varyani has sent several telegrams to Kothari, and even offered to apologise publicly for her husband's outburst, but he has not replied. Anyway, that's the story by Henry Weber in the *Weekly World News* 1 March 1988.

PAPER NOT SO OLD

The invention of paper has moved forward 200 years to AD105 after a Chinese archaeologist admitted he faked evidence of the more ancient find 30 years ago. However, as compensation, archaeologists have unearthed a bronze jar in a tomb dating back 3,200 years in Luoshan county, Henan province, containing what may be the world's oldest wine. *Middlesbrough Eve. Gazette* 9 Mar & 12 Sept 1987.

NIT WIT BIT WRIT

Franco Brun, 22, was serving a 15 day sentence at the Toronto east Detention Centre, where he requested a Bible, and was given a small red, soft-covered one that measured 6 cm by 10 cm, which he stuffed down his throat. On 8 June 1987 he was admitted to an emergency ward in suburban Scarborough where an anaesthetist attempted, unsuccessfully, to extract the Bible with a kocker (medical pliers). A tracheotomy (windpipe incision) was too late, and Brun passed to the Great Beyond. Victoria (BC) *Times-Colonist* 1 Sept 1987.



ANOTHER HOUSE OF BLOOD

Readers might remember the house in Picardy that sweated blood a couple of years ago (**FT48**,p6). Now we hear of one in America. At around 11.30pm on 8 September 1987, Minnie Clyde Winston, 77, stepped out of her bath at 1114 Fountain Drive, southwest Atlanta, Georgia, to find the floor oozing blood "like a sprinkler". She also found blood in the kitchen, living room, bedroom, all the halls and the basement. She and her husband William, 79, a retired porter for the National Screen Service Company, had been married for 44 years, and had rented and lived in the six–room brick house for 22 years. William had gone to bed at 9.30 after locking the doors and activating a security system. Neither he nor his wife heard any intruders, they didn't have any pets and the house was free from rats, mice and cockroaches.

The following morning they called the police, and homicide detective Steve Cartwright found "copious amounts of blood" spattered on walls and floors in five rooms. The stains ranged in size from a dime to a silver dollar. In the basement, spots were found under a TV, on the dirt floor and in narrow spaces virtually impossible for a person to reach. "There must be some sort of natural explanation for it" he insisted. The house was declared a crime scene to keep reporters and curiosity seekers away, which proved a wise move later in the day when the house was besieged by such people. The State Crime Lab revealed the blood was human, type O. William Winston had kidney trouble and had his blood (type A) cleaned regularly by dialysis at a clinic. His wife's blood was also type A. "My wife is upset because she doesn't know where it's come from", he said. "Me, I'm not bothered about it, because I'm in bad enough shape as it is." [AP, UPI] San Antonio (TX) *Express-News*, *NY Daily News*, etc. 10 Sept; Atlanta (GA) *Constitution* 10&11 Sept; *NY Times* 12 Sept 1987.

GHOSTWRITERS

An author and his four "spirit guides" are receiving £40 a week from the British government to write a novel about a young mental patient possessed by a demon, it was revealed last July.

Peter Froude, 43, an unemployed interior decorator from Bournemouth, says *The Demonic* is actually written by his own great-grandfather, the historian JA Froude – with a little help from an "Oriental gentleman" named Ging; Sybil, a Scandinavian; and a Persian shade called Jasmin.

Froude practises automatic writing, "hypnotising" himself with the aid of a pendulum and transcribing each chapter as one continuous paragraph, with no breaks between the words. Alternate lines are in mirror writing.

A defensive-sounding Manpower Services Commission employee told interested journalists that Froude had not discussed his help-mates when applying for the grant. "He said he was inspired by the subconscious, and we tend to think that most of our writers are inspired in some shape or form," Ernest Medlock explained. "We did write to him and ask what it was about, and he said it was a ghost story. There was no mention of spirits apart from the ones he was going to write about."

The case was an unusual one, said Medlock, and there would be an early review.

Predictably enough, the British media were happy to use the story as a light-hearted filler. But Froude's talent is no wilder than many we have chronicled in these pages; we prefer to reserve judgement until we can assess the quality of the work itself. *Guardian, Times, D.Telegraph* 10 Jul 1987.

WRIGGLY WRECORD

Mrs Ellen Bush of Blackburn Road, Greenhill, Herne Bay, Kent, looked out into her garden the morning after a violent thunderstorm, and saw a blackbird pulling and pulling at a worm. She and her husband Richard scared off the bird and retrieved the complete worm, which measured 80 inches, taller than most humans. They took it to the Brambles Wildlife Park near Canterbury. Said owner Alan Breeze: "It was lovely. We called it Michel because earthworms are male and female so we needed a name that could do for either." The current British worm record was 44 inches (*D.Telegraph* 10 May) or 38 inches (*Guardian* 12 May 1988).

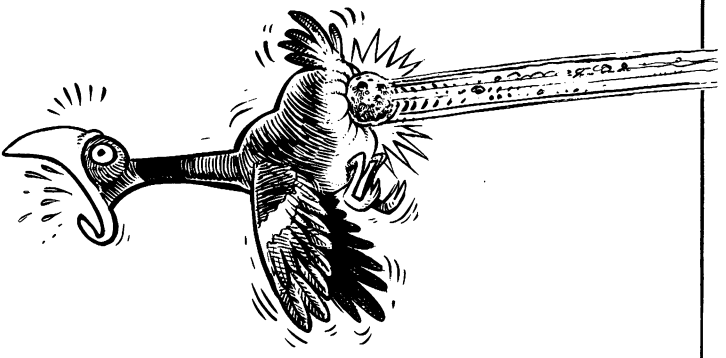
Breeze invited cameras in to record the prodigy being held out for measuring by five staff. "People kept coming in wanting us to stretch it out for them to see, and, well, it just began to break up." The remnant top end of Michel was housed in a glass case of the very best soil and was still wriggling two days after discovery, but had not grown up again. Other sources: *D.Mirror* 10 May, which asserts that the world record was a South African worm of 22 feet; *The News* (Portsmouth) 11 May; *Herne Bay Extra* 20 May 1988.

MOON FIGHT

Mullahs exchanged blows in the Northwest Frontier provincial capital of Peshawar and other towns in Pakistan on 16 May 1988 in arguments over whether the new moon had been sighted or not, according to the *Daily Jang* newspaper. Exhuberant Peshawar residents fired automatic rifles to mark the Muslim new moon festival, injuring at least 40. Because of the confusion, the festival was celebrated both the day before and the day after, in various parts of the country. [R] *The Star* (Malaysia) 19 May 1988.

METEOR COOKS GOOSE

A Canada goose leading a flock that crashed to the ground in a yellow flash was believed to have been hit by a meteor. "It looked like a laser beam had struck it – the bird just stopped dead in its tracks", said farmer Duncan Tesloss, 21, of Polebrooke, Northants, who was driving his tractor in a nearby field. It was found with a hole in its back and two further holes in its breast, and was put in a school deep freeze to await scientific examination. *D.Express* 19 Mar 1987.



GREEN NEMESIS

▼ While the dreaded Japweed chokes our coastlines (see **FT40**,p6), an even more vicious plant, *Crassula helmsii*, aka Australian swarm stonecrop, aka *Tillaea recurua*, is taking over ponds and waterways, killing other plants, fish, ducks and anything else in its path. It was brought to Britain to oxygenate ornamental ponds about the turn of the century, and is recognisable by its small white flower. In the past 20 years it has spread dramatically, and now grows on 125 British sites, which number is doubling every 3 to 5 years. It can easily be mistaken for sphagnum in swamps or for starwort in chalky lakes. It flourishes in still or running water, in dense growths or isolated clumps, on steep banks, marginal swamp, or in floating mats on deep water. It grows very fast, summer and winter. It seems to be Australia's revenge for the rabbit, which did so much damage over there. *D.Mail* 3 Aug 1987. Maurice Burton (*Weekend Telegraph* 12 Sep 1987) is reminded of the Canadian waterweed introduced to Ireland in 1836 and England in 1842 which spread to almost all the inland waters of western Europe and choked several of them.

▼ Jeremy Avery and Len Warner were fishing in the Solent near Gosport on 28 September 1987 when the latter reeled in his line and hauled up a mass of seaweed that glowed fluorescent green and gave off electric shocks. They both suffered severe headaches after exposure to this marine horror. *The News* (Portsmouth) 29 Sep 1987.

▼ Kudzu, the Godzilla of weeds that grows up to 16 inches a day and 100 feet a year, was brought from Japan to America to decorate the Japanese pavilion at the US centennial celebrations in Philadelphia in 1876 with its three–pointed leaves and purple blossoms, and people took cuttings home. It grew rapidly in the southern states, farmers fed it to their livestock, and during the Depression the government gave away millions of plants, as its 20–foot roots stopped erosion, and its production of nitrogen replenished cotton–fatigued southern land. There was kudzu radio promo, songs, clubs, queens.

By the time it was realised that it killed everything it invades by starving it of sunlight, it was out of control across millions of acres from Texas to Virginia and rooted deep in gothic folklore. You can't get rid of it. In Alabama they fly around looking for kudzu tentacles that threaten to pull down power lines.

Now it has moved across the Mason–Dixon Line, and established a beachhead in Lloyd Harbour, Long Island. It has spread thigh–deep across a two acre field and swarmed up 75–foot–high maple trees to spy out its next move. How it got there is anybody's guess. Said an expert: "You know how hard it is to get dandelions out of your lawn? Well, these are like dandelions the size of your car." Dermot Pugavie's 'Letter from America' in *D.Mail* 26 Oct 1987.

▼ Daniel Padderson of Canberra, Australia, bought a Venus flytrap and injected it regularly with steroids. Normally, they grow to about 6 inches, but his grew to nearly 4 feet. He began feeding it several ounces of raw hamberger meat daily. Then his budgie got out of its cage and flew around his greenhouse. It landed on the flytrap, and the jaws snapped shut. "I could hear Angel flapping his wings inside as I tried to pry the plant open," said Padderson, "but soon it was all over." Devastated, he gave the plant to botanists at a local university. Anyway, that's the tale told by Brian Whicker in *Celebrity* (8 Oct 1987.)

Paul Sieveking

UNKINDEST CUTS

Yes, it's me on the topic of penis severing again. You'll just have to take my word for it, that I'm not obsessed with the subject. I could try justifying it with an appeal to Fort's observation about all sciences being mutilated in some way, but I won't. These clipping keep arriving, nontheless, so what's a fortean to do but to write them up bravely! The **really** obsessed will already know of previous reports in **FT46** (p18) and **FT47** (p21). So, bring on the snippings...

● More has come to light about the Shanghai surgical team that has a renowned success rate in repairing severed penises. 50 such operations have been performed since 1982 by 71yr-old Prof. Chang Desheng at the city's No.2 Medical University; all but one successfully. Dr Chang presented his results at a meeting in New Delhi in March 1987, attended by two London consultant plastic surgeons, Peter Davis of St Thomas' and Dai Davies of the West Middlesex Hospital, according to the *Observer* 2 Aug 1987. Mr Davies, who has attempted reconstructions, said: "It's a very difficult operation even to enable a man to urinate." Both men agreed that "Chang has come up with something original," and this is in his skill at reconnecting tiny blood vessels, and in using thin skin from the forearm. Chinese techniques of plastic surgery began with the attempts to help Korean war victims.

One of Chang's cases involved Khalid Mamood, a Pakistani who went to China in desperation after losing his penis in an industrial accident, a local operation having failed. Chang took skin from Mamood's arm and a sliver of a rib and fashioned him a new organ. Within two weeks, Chang said, Mamood had "regained the function of his penis." The London surgeons say they are confident they could now perform similar reconstructions, but added that they see very few candidates. Just why there should be so many more of these painfully personal partings in the Far East, our men could not say. Perhaps, they thought, it had something to do with "lower industrial safety standards". Somehow, in perusing the items below, that explanation doesn't hold much water.

● A man wearing only a jacket was found wandering on the M62 motorway at Bowring Park, Liverpool, by police who were shocked to discover the man's penis had been cut off. He said he had been attacked in a field by two men, stripped and then mutilated. The 49yr-old married man was taken to Broadgreen Hospital, where he was made "comfortable". He later confessed that he did it himself. *Middlesbrough Eve. Gazette*, *D.Mirror* 27 Sept 1986.

● Merv Maltby, a 30yr-old labourer of Mildura, New South Wales, came home from a boozing spree and sliced off his salami with a carving knife. Having caught him out with another woman, Merv said his wife had nagged him for two weeks. "Now neither of them can have me," he told doctors. He and his penis were flown 300 miles to Melbourne for a 6hr reunion. *The People* 19 Oct 1986.

● Cyprian Okech, a Ugandan plumber, awoke from a drunken stupour to find family jewels missing. Police, who took him to a hospital in Kampala, said they feared he had been deprived of his "parts" to supply the "black magic" trade. *Sun* 29 Oct 1986. We shall have more about the use of human organs in African *muti* witchcraft in a future issue.

● In the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, a woman walked into a police station with the bleeding genitals of a man she claimed had tried to rape her. The man, a married neighbour, had escorted her to the cinema in Madurai, but on the way home attacked her. Enraged, she relieved the man of his genitals, then gave herself up. The man was found unconscious and taken to hospital. *Arab News* 6 March 1987. In Dacca, Bangladesh, a wife who found her husband with a prostitute, bought a razor and cut off his penis. *Sun* 19 June 1987. Perhaps the women of the great Indian subcontinent are fed–up with their centuries of oppression, for we have another note here of a downtrodden wife who hit back at a bullying drunkard of a husband who gave her nothing but years of social embarassment. In New Delhi Sunil John's wife, Daljit, and her father lay in wait for him, and after her father knocked him unconscious with a stick, Daljit lopped off his tongue and, for good measure, an ear. Methinks he got off lightly! *Weekly World News* 30 Dec 1986.

● Graham Hezzlewood of Burnley, Lancs, a 53yr-old Jehovah's Witness who lived alone, took off his penis with a hammer and chisel. Neighbours, alerted by his moans, found him sitting in a bloodstained chair. He told horrified ambulancemen: "I chopped it off. I've had enough trouble with it." *Sun, D.Mirror* 10 June 1987.

● A disabled Hong Kong businessman, Lin Yuk–sang, asked magistrates to be lenient with his wife who had

cut of his penis with scissors and flushed it down the toilet after she discovered he had a mistress. She got 4½ years. [R] *Independent, D.Mirror, Guardian* 5 Aug 1987.

Bob Rickard

THAT'S NO WOMAN, THAT'S MY HUSBAND

Rosalinda de Hernandez, of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, was in a state of shock after doctors told her that her husband Gustavo was actually female ...and was six months pregnant. They had been married nine years. Gustavo was killed by another woman in a barroom fight. Hernandez told the daily newspaper, *Heraldo*, that although their love life had seemed odd, she never suspected that her husband was a woman. St Louis *Post-Dispatch* 27 Aug 1987.

PENGUIN OUTRAGE

A Lithuanian newspaper reported that Saulyus Baltrimas drank two bottles of vodka with a guard at an aquarium, and then got locked in a penguin cage while the guard slept. He kicked five of the well-dressed waddlers to death and was sent to a labour camp for five years. *D.Telegraph* 9 Jan 1988.

SECOND MULE BIRTH

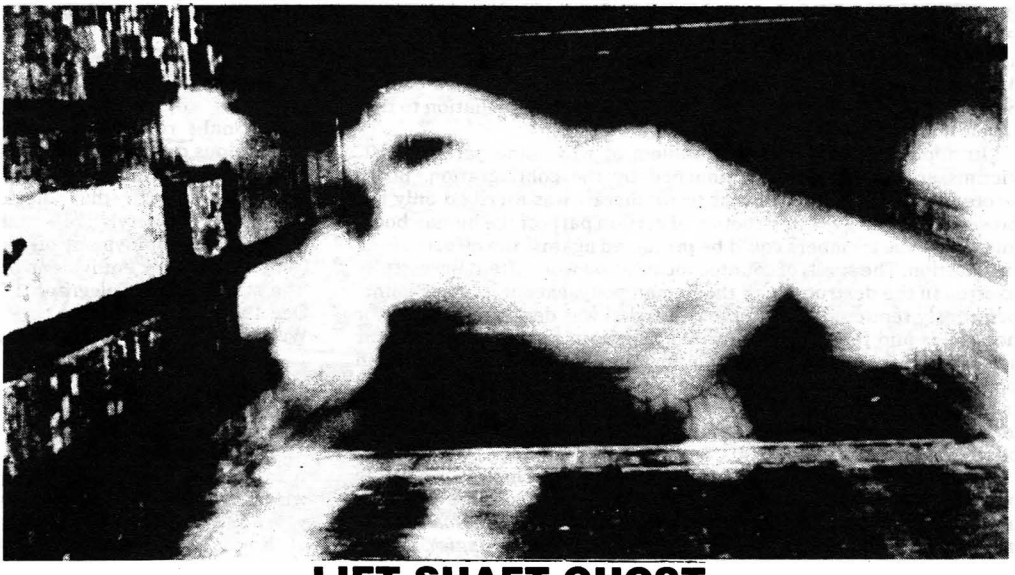
Krause, the Nebraska mule that gave birth on 6 July 1984 [see **FT45** p13], the first properly authenticated mule mother, did it again on 11 November 1987. Chester the donkey was again the father. The offspring are called Blue Moon and White Lightning. Lincoln (NE) *Journal*, Minneapolis *Star Tribune* 14 Nov 1987.

LORRY NETTED

Fishermen on the Buckie-registered *Sharon Louise* were puzzled by the weight of the net they were heaving in 200 miles east of Peterhead in Scotland. Then they saw a set of huge wheels and part of an under-carriage. They were able to read the lorry's registration number before they were forced to cut away the net and return it to the sea. Skipper Simpson intended sending a report of the incident to the Scottish Fishermen's Federation. *Fishing News* 3 July 1987.

BELT DRIVE

A Los Angeles motorist who strapped his teddy bear into the passenger seat but failed to do up his own seat belt was killed when his car spun off the road and fell 35 feet. The bear was undamaged. (UPI) *Independent* 4 Mar 1988.



LIFT SHAFT GHOST

Lift engineer Russell Mather was working on a lift shaft at Kingsley and Forrester Ltd., Gorse Mill, Chadderton, near Manchester, and took this picture of the shaft. He was unaware of the ghostly shape until the picture was printed. "You can clearly see a head, arms and legs on some sort of figure", said his wife Linda. Back at the mill, he was told a story of a little girl being killed after falling down the shaft, but a spokesman for Oldham historical studies group could find no record of her death. *Bolton Eve. News* 6 Feb 1988.

SPECTRAL SAILOR

The crew of the Bridlington trawler *Pickering* had an unusual reason for signing on at the local DHSS: their ship, they said, was haunted.

Skipper Derek Gates told social security officials that he and his crew were reluctant to sail on a vessel whose steering sometimes failed without reason and whose radar went haywire every morning at 1.30am. Cabin lights would turn themselves on and off, said Gates, and the crew's quarters sometimes seemed to be freezing cold when the heating was at maximum.

The 60-foot long fishing vessel had already seen off her previous captain, Michael Laws, who reported that the engines had twice failed inexplicably at sea. He had had the heating system overhauled three times, sensed a 'presence' in the bunk above him while he rested, and – to top it all – crewman Barry Mason had reported seeing a mysterious figure in a flat cap on deck late at night.

"My three months on the *Pickering* were the worst in 17 years at sea," Laws told the *Fishing News* (18 Dec 1987). "I did not earn a penny because things were always going wrong and no-one could understand or explain why."

Anxious to get Gates and his four-man crew back to work, a DHSS clerk who happened to be a lay preacher appealed to Anglican exorcist Tom Willis for assistance. The clergyman (whose daytime job is as Vicar of the Holy Trinity church in Sewerby) went to sea in the *Pickering* and conducted a service of exorcism sometime in mid-December 1987.

"Next day we sensed a totally different atmosphere," said Gates, who went happily back to sea in the trawler. "It was warm and friendly and since then we have not had problems and had very successful fishing trips."

According to research carried out by the Rev. Willis, the *Pickering* had once been registered in Eire as the *Family Crest*. A crewman had been lost overboard from the ship while it was owned by a family named Gallagher, and it was implied that it might have been his ghost which haunted the *Pickering*. Additional source: *Guardian* 15 Dec 1987.

■ An interesting comment on this tale was made by the *Daily Telegraph*'s gossip columnist Peter Simple, who observed: "Has this story not got everything that is appropriate to the season – the troubled fishermen, the driving out of unclean spirits (or at least the repose of an unshriven soul), the final reward of the 'miraculous draught of fishes' – and not least the finding of salvation through that bleak refuge of society's rejected ones, the unemployment office (a contemporary equivalent of 'the stable')." (*D.Telegraph* 17 Dec 1987).

Well, now you put it that way...

BURN WITCH BURN!

To supplement the SHC material in this issue, we add a footnote to the famous spontaneous combustion of Grace Pett in 1744, which Peter Christie reported on in FT35. This item concerns the intriguing speculation by A. Booth of Colchester in a letter to the editor of *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement & Instruction* (vol 20, No 566, 15 Sept 1832), in which he proposes a very different explanation to that favoured by modern rationalists.

In applying himself to the problem of why some parts of SHC victims are found almost untouched by the conflagration, Booth wrote: "It was well known that to witchcraft was ascribed only the power of affecting the destruction of certain parts of the human body, and that some members could be protected against the effects of the incantation. The spells of counter-incantation were often successfully exerted in the destruction of the human body, except in those points previously rendered invulnerable. Jezebel was destroyed except for her hands and feet... Might not the vulgar, in search of a cause for so singular a phenomenon as spontaneous combustion of the human body, find in the powers of witchcraft an easy solution? Grace Pitt [sic] who was burned in this manner in Suffolk... was a reputed witch, and her death was assigned by the country people to the effects of contra-incantation... "

We know, from Peter Christie's diligent research, that the theme of witchcraft in the case of Grace Pett is absent from the accounts and discussions by the main authorities (eg. *Philosophical Transactions*, and Sir David Brewster's *Letters on Natural Magic*), which, in purporting to be scientific reports characteristically scorned the explanations of yokels and less elevated folk. But, we wonder, could the tantalizing notion of 'psychic backlash', and a link to archaic beliefs, be discovered in other cases? We would be interested if anyone can add to the discussion.

Incidentally, devotees of SHC may like to know that the *Mirror of Literature* ran a six-part study of SHC in volume 32, which gives several cases not mentioned by Michael Harrison and others.

A PUZZLED CHINAMAN

A retired restaurant boss of 72, who has lived in Britain for 30 years and hardly speaks a word of English, is baffled by the shocked reactions of folk in Ilkley, Yorkshire, when he is asked his name and replies: "Fuk Yue To". His son Kam To explained: "We have never told him what his name means in English. It would not be polite to do so." *Sun* 4 Feb 1988.

PHENOMENOMIX
HUNT EMERSON • Text adapted from CHARLES FORT (Wild Talents - Ch. 14)
CHARLES FORT is conducting his researches at the British Museum Library reading room...
THE FASHION TODAY is for MODERN SCIENCE to scoff at OLD-TIME PHYSICIANS, and their sometimes extraordinary prescriptions...
NOW, YOU MUST TAKE FOUR DRIED TOADS EVERY DAY...
DRIED TOADS? HAH! I SCOFF!!
MUST I?...
FASHIONABLE MODERN SCIENCE
I NOW HAVE A THEORY OF WHAT IS CALLED EVOLUTION, IN TERMS OF FASHIONS...
...SOMEWHERE - PERHAPS ON HIGH - THERE IS A PARIS....
...WHERE, ONCE UPON A TIME, WERE DICTATED THE MODES IN BUGS AND WORMS...
BUGS WILL BE... CRAWLY!
AH, OUI! CRAWLY!
AND WORMS, MASTER - HOW WILL WORMS BE?
FLAT!
...PASSING ON TO A MENTAL FIELD OF ALTERNATING EXTRAVAGANCES....
CHURCH OF BACCHUS
...AND THEN THE COSTUMES OF BIRDS AND MAMMALS....
LAST YEAR "THE MASTER" AMAZED THE WORLD OF FASHION WITH HIS DARING "GIRAFFE".
Bizarre!
Elegant!
...BUT THIS SEASON HE SEEMS TO HAVE REPENTED WITH HIS "HIPPOPOTAMUS"!
Brutal!
Outré!
Cheek!
...SOMETIMES NEAT AND TASTEFUL....
ACTION
DEMAND
NOW
MODERATION
...BUT OFTEN ELABORATE AND ROCOCO...
...WITH RELIGIONS, PHILOSOPHIES AND SCIENCES IMPOSING UPON THE FASHION SLAVES OF THE EARTH THE LATEST THING IN THEORIES!
MOVE TO THE LEFT...
MOVE TO THE RIGHT...
Bleat
Bleat
Bleat
Bleat
...AND, HAH! EVEN AS I SIT HERE, I READ THE FOLLOWING: "JANUARY 14th 1932... IMPORTANT MEDICAL DISCOVERY... DRIED PIGS' STOMACHS' AS A CURE FOR ANAEMIA! HAH!
FOUR TO BE TAKEN EACH DAY... A GREAT BREAKTHROUGH...
Yechhh! I THINK I PREFERRED THE TOADS! I WISH THEY'D HURRY UP AND INVENT TASTELESS PILLS!
HUSH, CHILD, LEST THEY HANG YE FOR HERESY!...
WILD TALENTS
MISTER FORT! THIS IS A PUBLIC LIBRARY! PLEASE BE MORE QUIET, OR I SHALL HAVE TO ASK YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TO LEAVE!

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

According to the front page of *Sunday Sport* (3 April 88) – Britain's answer to *Weekly World News* – mothers-to-be are "living in fear of a 2-headed baby plague". Certainly, with the astonishing number of cases since Autumn 1987 – and especially in January this year – it must have seemed like that. The *Sport* pins the blame on Chernobyl, but that seems a bit simplistic; Europe may well have become a less safe place for foetuses after the Russian nuclear disaster but the stories that follow come from all over the world. As a Fortean I cannot accept the idea of a single cause for anything in the phenomenal world. (If any cause can be established beyond doubt to be unmixed with, or independent of other causes, that cause would be Absolute and outside our realm of polarities.) Just why Chernobyl should be picked out from a frighteningly long and regularly updated list of environmental disasters is a question for social psychologists or media-watchers, but given the sorry state of Mother Earth at the hands of her thoughtless children I don't think anyone can be surprised by the notion that Nature herself can and will show all manner of symptoms of functional and structural illness. This little list should give us pause for thought.

Two-headed babies are not discrete abnormalities, but come at one end of a whole spectrum of major teratological abnormalities arising from the variety of ways in which (usually) two – sometimes more – foetuses, co-present in the womb, try to fuse with each other: this could range from otherwise normal twins joined by a narrow tube of skin to instances of one twin wholly absorbing the other. In between come the two-headed babies, whose bodies have partially fused (usually with incomplete development of one or the other, or both).

WEST GERMANY

● Patrick and Benjamin Binder, born in Ulm in February 1987, underwent 22-hour surgery to separate them at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, Maryland. They were joined at the back of the head; their brains were separate but shared a partition of bone and a major blood vessel. During surgery the boys bodies were cooled, and heart and lungs stopped for an hour while new blood vessels were formed.

After surgery the boys were kept in a pentobarbital-induced coma for a week, to allow brain swellings to reduce. During that time they returned to the theatre for plastic surgery and irrigation of the wounds. One boy was left with a 4x6 inch hole in his skull which will be closed later by a titanium plate. As they were weaned back to consciousness, they suffered breathing problems and were returned to a ventilator for a period. CAT scans reveal "nothing which precludes recovery". [AP, UPI] Baltimore (MD) *Sun* 4+9+11+13+16+19 Sept; *Washington Post* 13+14+18+21 Sept; Annapolis *Capital* 9+11+18; *USA Today* 21+24 Sept 1987.

BRAZIL

● A 2-headed baby was born in Itlumbiara, in southern Goias. Delivered by caesarian and developed breating problems. The boys were sent to a hospital in Goiania, a city where, the previous September, they had a major radiation accident involving Cesium 137. *Midi Madagasikara* (Madagascar) 7 Dec 1987.

IRAN (Photo).

● A 28yr-old woman gave birth to a baby with two well-formed indepentent heads in Tehran on 23 December 1987. The boys each had a spinal column, heart and set of lungs. A small malformed arm nestled between the heads. Breathing was difficult because each side of the rib-cage was controlled by the nervous system on that side; nevertheless, they managed to yell well enough. Both mouths lead to a shared alimentary canal. Within two months the family had rejected the boys and left them in the care of the doctors, reports said, because they could not cope with the deformities.

In an extraordinary scene during the baby's second week, the hospital allowed a special visit from 13yr-old Siamese sisters Laleh and Laden, whose family name was not given but who are also Iranian. These older twins have almost the opposite condition, having two almost normal bodies but they are joined by the back and side of their heads. In their case surgery would have been fatal, and they must have sympathized with the boys' plight with untold insight. The *Weekly World News* (16 Feb 1988), with its usual sensitivity and imagination, leaped to the conclusion that the two sets of twins were actually related and ran a pastiche account under the banner: *SIAMESE TWINS MEET THEIR 2-HEADED BROTHER*. They even concocted a name for the poor boy/s: Janus Rad. 'Janus' we understand, but is 'Rad' their nod to their long-running lust for radiation-freak stories? One of the obstetricians, Dr Reihan Mir-Damadi, later speculated that the abnormalities might have been caused by the mother's exposure to X-rays while taking "unprescribed" medicines, but this is not elaborated upon. [IRNA, AP, UPI] *D.Mirror, Independent, Express & Star, Sun* 29 Dec; Houston (TX) *Chronicle* 30 Dec *1987;Sun* 6 Jan; Indianapolis *Star* 8 Jan; Sun 14 Jan; *Stern* 28 Jan 1988.

CHINA

● According to the *Shaoyang Daily*, a 2.2 pound foetus – an absorbed twin – was removed

The Iranian boys, abandoned in a Tehran hospital by their shocked parents. [*Stern* 28 Jan 1988.]

Peter and Brendan Uren, born in Sydney. [*National Examiner* 26 Jan 1988.]

from the abdomen of a 40-day-old baby girl. [R] *Guardian* 4 Jan 1988.

SOUTH AFRICA

● A 2-headed female baby with two spinal columns in a single torso (like the Iranian boys) was born, on 16 January 1988, in the hospital at Paarl by caesarean and taken to the Tygerberg Hospital, Johannesburg. They died about 48 hours later. [AP] *Sun, Express & Star, Times, D.Mirror, Independent*, Montreal *Star*, Cleveland (OH) *Plain Dealer*, Victoria (BC) *Times*, St Louis (MO) *Post-Dispatch* 18 Jan; *Sun, Yorkshire Post, Express & Star, Telegraph & Argus, Cambridge Eve.News,* Cleveland (OH) *Plain Dealer*, *Sun* (Mauritius) 19 Jan; *Sun, Express* (Mauritius) 20 Jan 1988.

AUSTRALIA (Photo).

● Karen and Brett Uren were in no doubt that their 2-headed baby was two separate beings sharing a single torso, and named them Peter and Brendan, born in early January in Sydney. Like the South African and Iranian twins they each have their own heart, lungs and spine. They share a fused arm, which protrudes from their fused shoulder. *National Examiner* 26 Jan 1988.

UNITED STATES

● A boy was born at Jackson Memorial Hospital, Miami, with an enlarged head with two separate faces, each with its own eyes, mouth and nose but shared an airway. However, it had a meningomyelocele, similar to spina bifida, in which the spinal tissues are exposed. The brain contained little tissue and lacked a stem. The baby died a week later. [AP] Cleveland (OH) *Plain Dealer*, Lincoln (NB) *Journal*, New Jersey *Record* 24 Jan; *Express* (Mauritius) 25 Jan + 1 Feb; *News of the World* 31 Jan 1988.

INDONESIA

● At Pekandelan, on Bali, a baby was born with three legs, two penises and two tongues. It was being breastfed by its mother and seemed in "good health" except for a malformation of the intestines which needed treatment. [Antara] *Express* (Mauritius) 27 Jan 1988

ITALY

● Twin girls, fused in much the same way as the others above, were born on 5 March to Immaculata Tedesco at the

The Turkish boy, Mehmet, showing his secondary head attached to his abdomen. [*News of the World* 20 March 1988].

Loreto Hospital in Naples. The father, Aniello, was distraught, accusing the doctors of incompetence for insisting all was well during the pregnancy. While the Church debated whether the infant had two souls (!), their father called in a priest to baptise them Geraldina and Franca. The girls behave independently and have most of their own internal organs but share a bladder and lower intestines. A month later and the mother still had not seen them; she had been told she had twins but that they needed special care. As in the above cases, surgery to separate them was out of the question. *Guardian* 12 March; *Sunday Sport* 3 April 1988.

ETHIOPIA

● Shehu Allago, with a history of twin births, gave birth to a two headed baby, by caesarian, in Belesa, Shoa province. The baby dies shortly after. [ENA] *Express* (Mauritius) 24 March 1988.

TURKEY (Photo).

● Also in March little Mehmet Aydin was born in Adaiyaman. When his parents saw the large malformed head protruding from his abdomen, they prepared to kill him, as peasants have done for centuries, presumably, with unwanted babies. A quick-thinking nurse whisked the baby off to the General Hospital at Diyarbakir where a team of doctors, led by Dr Gazi Aydin (no relation) decided an operation was possible after a short study revealed that the extra head did not share any vital organs with Mehmet.

The separation took three hours, after which, to the consternation of the medical staff, the head continued to show vital signs for a further three hours. There was no possibility, however, of keeping it alive. As a head its eyes were undeveloped and it had no nose or mouth – but inside the head and rudimentary chest were a brain, a tiny heart and liver, and underdeveloped lungs. Since separation, Mehmet has been brought back for check-ups and pronounced healthy, and his family and village have accepted him back.

Dr Aydin obtained permission from the family to preserve the surplus head for medical study; both its rarity and its curiously arrested development made its study a matter of some importance. But the resulting treatment of this story in the *Sunday Sport* was appalling. To begin with, their headline screamed: *UFO SHOCKER, ALIEN BABY KEPT IN A JAM JAR!* The UFO association only occurs in their text when they allude to the chest-bursting scene in the film *Alien*. The leading line reads: "Surgeons who chopped off an ALIEN baby's extra head have put it in a JAM JAR." (Their emphasis). Then they add, helpfully, that the 'jar' will be filled with "an embalming fluid which can also kill slugs." *News of the World* 20 Mar; *Sunday Sport* 8 May 1988.

SOUTH AFRICA (Photo).

● Just five days before Mehmet's operation, a considerably more dangerous one was successfully completed at the Baragwanath Hospital near Johannesburg. Twin girls, Mpho and Mphonyana Mathibela, were born in December 1986, joined at the back of their heads. Although they had separate brains and were normal in every other aspect, their brains shared a single vital vein. Prof Robert Lipschitz and his team spent seven months preparing the babies for their final separation; even so, there was drama when bleeding proved difficult to stop. Baltimore (MD) *Sun* 16 Sept 1987; *Sunday Sport* 8 May; *Sunday Mail* (Malaysia) 5 June 1988.

SOMALIA

● A 3-month-old girl, born in Mogadishu, had an extra head successfully removed in a 10-hour operation at St Matthew's Hospital in Parvia, Italy. Like Mehmet's, her secondary featureless head contained a brain and was larger than her normal one, but was situated at the back of her neck. The report says that the team, led by Prof

Giorgio Rondini, "also transplanted brain cells from the useless growth" into the normal brain, but why is not explained. *Sun* 20 April 1988.

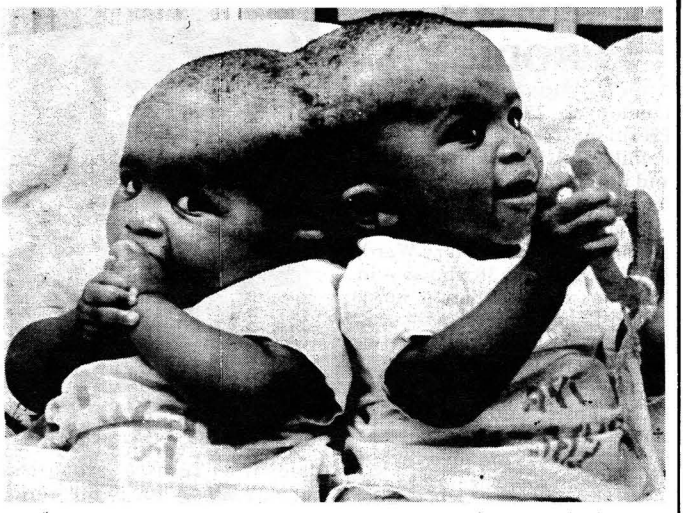
OFF WITH HIS HEAD!

● This story comes from the *Weekly World News* (23 Feb 1988) and so must be read with all the usual caveats. It concerns a 19yr-old Indian boy, Jayanti Gauri, who cut off a smaller secondary head which grew from a shared neck. He applied a tourniquet and sought medical attention immediately, but was subsequently arrested and languishes in a Bangalore jail awaiting trial for murder.

"Legal and ethical questions abound in this case," says the prosecutor, Maniar Bhupendra, who has to overcome the objection that murder was not involved because the head Gauri cut off was his own. [Huh?] Gauri, himself, insists he has committed no crime, and is confident he can defend himself in court. An ethics professor at Bangalore University has taken an interest in Gauri's case, saying: "The young man had every right to rid himself of a spare head that condemned him to the hellish life of a freak. I can see where religious people might have reservations, but I suggest to you that the seat of the human soul is the heart, not the head. This young man did not commit murder."

If the head, which was said to have had an "average intellect", was the result of a partially developed and absorbed twin, as seems likely, then biologically it would have to be considered as a separate individual, or at least it originally had the potential to be an independent twin. Did Guari murder his twin, then? By his own admission, it protested vigorously when he began to cut it off. But he feels no remorse. "My brain was in command of our body, not his. It was the hardest thing I've ever done. For the first time in my life I feel free and normal."

Bob Rickard



The South African girls, Mpho and Mphonyana (meaning 'Gift' and 'Little Gift'), who were successfully separated in the Baragwanath Hospital near Johannesburg. [*Sunday Mail* (Malaysia) 5 June 1988].

I CAN TALK, CAN YOU FLY? No. 2

We have received quite a different story about a taunting Californian parrot (see **FT48** p23). Shadowfax, a Double Yellow Headed Amazon parrot, fluttered into San Quentin jail on 1 December 1986, and soon wore out his welcome by jeering "I can talk. Can you fly?" The Marin County Humane Society was called in three days later, and two animal control officers nabbed the bird above the sixth tier of Carson Section, a cell block for some of the prison's toughest cons. They returned the bird to its owner, Nancy MacCarthy of San Rafael, who said she had never heard it utter anything but a squawk. *San Francisco Chronicle* 12 May 1986.

Note that our earlier report was set in Healdsburg, California, two months earlier. Perhaps it was a different parrot, and had taught Shadowfax the memorable catch–phrase... or perhaps it's a FOAFtale in the act of migrating?

ELECTRIC MAN

Xue Dibo, 36, a worker at a boiler factory in Urumqi, capital city of China's northwestern province of Xinjiang, "felt strange sensations at the beginning of the year", according to the New China News Agency, quoting the *Xinjiang* daily newspaper. He discovered that he could emit electric charges strong enough to knock people down simply by touching them. [AFP] *Gulf News* 3 Mar: [CNA] *l'Express* (Mauritius) 7 Mar 1988.

DOUBLE DELUSIONS

People who believe that a relative or a close friend has been replaced by their double are said to suffer from Capgras syndrome. A report in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* contains a chilling account from a secure psychiatric unit in Missouri. A man there accused his stepfather of being a robot and decapitated him to look for batteries and microfilm inside his head. *Independent* 23 Feb 1988.

GYPSY PRODIGY

After a private hearing in London on 27 May 1988, the President of the High Court Family Division asked the press and public to help in the search for five gypsy brothers, missing for about three weeks. The mother of the boys, Mary Ward, an Irishwoman of 38 who lives in Newham, east London, is not a gypsy, but married Charles Ward, a genuine traveller. He died six days before the birth of his seventh son, Bernard, in 1982. Gypsies said that because of this circumstance, and the fact that he was the seventh son of a seventh son, Bernard would have special powers to heal thrush and back problems; but his mother didn't believe them. Bernard was simply an ordinary little dark–haired stocky boy who suffered from fits and needed medical care. He was snatched from his mother while she was shopping in Stratford, east London. His elder brothers, Patrick, 16, Thomas, 14, Martin, 10, and John, 9, had previously been taken on 18 March, returned the following day, only to vanish again in April while playing football. A warrant has been issued for the arrest of their sister Rose, 18, and her husband, Martin, who are thought to have information on the disappearance. Two sons remain with Mrs Ward. *Independent* 28 May 1988.

GREMLIN PUSS

Baldy from Texas, a rare furless cat, one of only 100 in the world, photographed in a New York animal show. *D.Mirror* 27 Sept 1986.

BODIES IN BLACK

▲ Five soldiers on an exercise found the partly-decomposed body of a man face down in a gully at Red Brook on Holcombe Moor near Bury in Lancashire, on the edge of an army firing range. The man, aged about 35, carried £260 in cash and was lying near a stream about 200 yards from the nearest footpath. He had died from exposure about three weeks earlier. He was wearing ordinary black shoes and black trousers, two black T–shirts, two black jumpers, covered by a black anorak and a third black jumper. For some unstated reason, the police believed he came from Padiham near Burnley. *Bolton Eve. News* 23 April 1988.

▲ The body of a woman dressed in black was found in a room at the Bank Hotel in Folkestone on 3 May. The only clue to her identity was a black wallet with the initials J.E.A. *D.Telegraph* 4 May 1988.

MAGIC STONE CON

Madam Lim Swee Siang, 75, emerged from the finance firm in Chulia Street, Penang, Malaysia, on 15 March 1988, and was approached by three men, aged between 35 and 45, who showed her a stone which they claimed had "magical" powers. She became dizzy and handed them her life savings of $25,000 which she had just withdrawn. She realised that she had been cheated only after the men had left. She didn't report the incident to the police until 22 May, after being persuaded by her son. During the first week in May, Taiping police said that three men, two in their 50s and the third in his 20s, cheated two oyher women out of a total of $25,000 in cash and jewellery using a similar ploy. *The Star* (Malaysia) 23 May 1988.

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● **Our thanks go to:** Richard Adams, Kirk Alexander, Selby Anderson, Tim Ashbaugh, B.Barter, Ed Baxter, K.A.Beer, Paul Bennett, Clive Blamey, Janet & Colin Bord, R.Bowden, Ray Brilliant, Jean Louis Brodu, J.Butcher, Andy Carter, Brian Chapman, Bruce Chatterton, Peter Christie, Bill Collins, Richard Cotton, COUD–I, Mike Dash, Rodney Davies, J. DiGiacomo, Peter Hope Evans, George Featherstone, John Fleming, Mark Fountain, Richard Furlong, Alan Gardiner, Mike Griffin, Brian Hain, Mark A.Hall, Stuart A.Herkes, Susan Hetherington, J.Hitchens, Michael A.Hoffman II, R.Hudspith, J.T.Kirkwood, J.Lang, Walter Langbein, Paddy Long, C.J.Lonsbrough, Kurt Lothmann, Alexis Lykiard, Bill Lythgoe, Jerry Mabie, Kate McCamy, Nick Maloret, Dave Martin, Valerie Martin, Colin Mather, C.Matheson, Steve Moore, Ian S.Murray, Ray Nelke, Ralph Noyes, Pete Overton, Scott Parker, Nigel Pennick, Les Prince, B.J.Reynolds, Jim Riecken, Margo Sagov, Mel Saunders, Karl Shuker, Ian Simmons, Bob Skinner, Anthony Smith, S. Stebbing, Joe Swatek, Joe Trainor, Sarah Walsh, Owen Whiteoak, Ion Will, Jake Williams, Steve Wrathall, Joe Zarzynski.

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OPERATION DEEPSCAN

A REPORT FROM LOCH NESS

by MIKE DASH

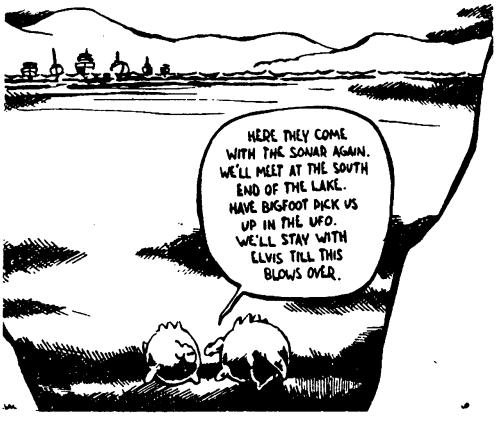
Take 24 cabin cruisers, 40 members of the Loch Ness & Morar Project, 20 young unemployed from the Drake Fellowship, 25 scouts from the London Docklands, 7 brace of sea cadets and a sprinkling of sonar experts from the Home Counties and you have an expedition. Add 250-300 pressmen (and women) from four continents, assorted PRs, seven or eight sponsors slugging it out for media exposure, and the block-booking of half the hotels for twenty miles around... and you have a recipe for disaster. The big question last October wasn't 'Will they find the monster?' It was 'Can they live up to the hype?'

Although the LNMP's '£1 million' Operation Deepscan was the most significant attempt to get to the bottom of the Loch Ness mystery for years, its organisers never promised any easy answers. Predictably enough, media hopes that one of the project vessels might return to harbour with a dinosaur strapped across her bow went unrealised. On the other hand, the flotilla did come up with some mildly positive results – sufficient at least to encourage those seeking some encouragement.

So perhaps we should begin by remembering what Operation Deepscan was not. It was not a £1m expedition – no more than £6,000 cash changed hands, which was less than the bar above the press centre took between October 3-14. Most donations were in kind – the loan of boats and echo sounders, a gift of food, free flights to Inverness for the press corps and so on – and the canny sponsors who guessed they would get their 'money' back (with interest) from the attendant publicity.

It was not exclusively a 'monster hunt'. Adrian Shine, the organiser, went north to study abyssal fauna, fish distribution and temperature variations in the lake and had plans to map the loch bed. "All we're trying to do here is to fill in the vacuum that exists in fact," he declared. "We want to find out what the largest things in Loch Ness are. We're neutral on this monster question, we're not a lobby."

Nor did Deepscan pretend to be definitive. It probed no more than 60% of the loch's deep water (though that was probably more than any previous expedition had managed in so short a time), and did so for only two and-a-half days. 'Yes' or 'no' answers were never going to be produced with echo sounders; press stories which described expedition members rushing into Inverness to lay bets on the Monster's reality were, regrettably, just that: stories.


HERE THEY COME WITH THE SONAR AGAIN. WE'LL MEET AT THE SOUTH END OF THE LAKE. HAVE BIGFOOT PICK US UP IN THE UFO. WE'LL STAY WITH ELVIS TILL THIS BLOWS OVER.

METHOD IN THEIR MADNESS

Operation Deepscan was the logical continuation of 14 years' work by project leader Adrian Shine. The LNMP has experimented with sonar and echo-sounding techniques at Loch Ness throughout the 1980s. In 1982, mobile patrols obtained up to 40 'interesting' contacts with Furuno and Simrad searchlight sonars. 1983 and 1984 attempts to repeat these results from moored vessels (eliminating the key variable of movement which complicated the interpretation of contacts) were broadly unsuccessful. The 1985 season was a washout, but in September 1986 the Project made its first attempt to move an echo-sounder 'curtain' down the loch.

Six sounders mounted on cabin cruisers were used to sweep the loch, but bad weather intervened in the shape of the equinocial gales and the search was abandoned as the flotilla passed Urquhart Castle.

1987 was a better year for the LNMP. A promotional trip round the radio stations and press conferences of Europe, coupled with an intensive PR effort, ensured that interest from press and sponsors was at an all-time high. The American echo-sounder giant Lowrance loaned the Project 22 of their X-16 sounders – fairly sophisticated machines despite their small size. Lowrance personnel led by corporation president Darrell Lowrance and ES expert Dave Steensland flew

over from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and back-up was provided by technicians from their UK distributor, Swiftech of Wallingford. The boats themselves came from the hire firm Caley Cruisers, of Inverness; fuel was provided by Texaco, food by the Co-Op and Inverness Meats, and so on.

Shine's scheme was essentially a simple one. Operating in October – normally a pleasant month at the loch – he planned to deploy 20 cruisers across the lake's one mile width at 50yd intervals. This spacing ensured that 30‹ cones of sound from the X-16s overlapped to provide comprehensive coverage, but avoided excessive interference. The two outside boats were in 300–600ft of water.

Flanking craft kept station by aligning themselves on flags flown by the two boats in the middle of the line – 'Blue leader' and 'Yellow leader' in Shine's quasi-military parlance – and the whole fleet moved down the loch at a speed of some 4mph. Behind the search line came a back-up flotilla which included a *Highland Admiral* class command boat, two cruisers manned by Swiftech personnel, and the sonar research vessel *New Atlantis*.

Contacts made below 150ft were signalled to the flagship, which directed one of the support craft onto the spot in an attempt to hold the target with more powerful equipment. The exact position was fixed using a Decca Navigator to allow later reinvestigation of the area, while the boat which had made the initial contact sailed on to prevent disruption of the line. Results were relaid to shore, where Shine occupied himself by co-ordinating operations and keeping a ravenous press corps fed with stories.

Each boat was crewed by 3–5 volunteers – most of whom had little or no experience with echo-sounders – and provided with a walkie-talkie and buoys with which to mark the spot at which contact was made. Settings on the chart recorders were fixed by sonar-expert Dave Steensland, who took advantage of the fire training days to calculate optimum range and supression adjustments.

The main aim of Operation Deepscan was to probe as much of the loch's volume as was possible in a few days and with limited resources. Logic suggested that if 'monsters' existed in Loch Ness at least some of them should be caught in a curtain of sound waves as the fleet moved down the loch. Shine therefore duplicated and improved on the experiment of 1986 and on a similar attempt made by a 1962 Cambridge expedition led by Peter Baker.

RESULTS AND RECRIMINATIONS

Three 19-boat sweeps were made between October 8 and October 10. The first, a final dress-rehearsal, was made on the 8th between the expedition base at the New Clansman Hotel, some four miles from the head of the loch on the northern shore, and a point just south of Foyers, halfway down the lake. On the 9th a full sweep was made from the New Clansman to Fort Augustus, the flotilla returning on the 10th and keeping formation until it reached Abriachan, just short of Tor Point, before returning to base.

One 'interesting' contact was made on the first day, nine on the second and none on the third. One further contact was obtained on October 12, after the press corps had left the loch. Information concerning five contacts was released to the press.

ES paper traces recording four contacts are reproduced **[right]**. Trace 1 shows a target just off the bottom in about 210m (690ft) of water a little to the north of Foyers. The contact was obtained in mid-loch by Yellow Leader at 12.13hrs on October 7. The circled trace to the left is a possible bottom formation; the straight vertical lines on this and subsequent charts were entered at one-mile intervals.

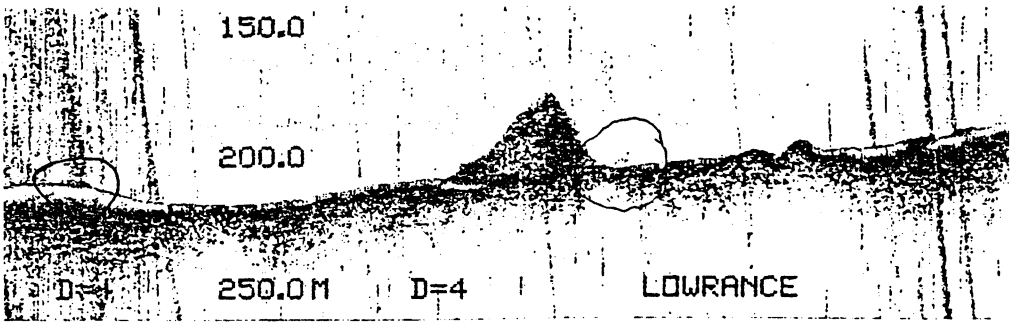
Trace 2 was picked up opposite Urquhart Castle at about 10.35hrs on the morning of the first full sweep (October 9). Described by Shine as "a contact of considerable strength", the target is at a depth of around 185m (605ft) of water and was in the beam for some 90 to 120 seconds. Interestingly enough it was registered (by the support boat *Swiftech 1*) at a point which the main line had just passed without obtaining any contacts.

The third trace was recorded nearly opposite Invermoriston that afternoon (about 1500hrs?) by Boat 4, stationed towards the northern end of the line. It shows a target at 176m (575ft) in 215m (705ft) of water.

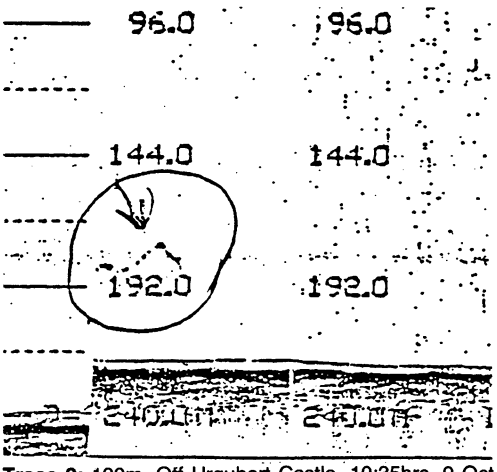
Finally we come to the exceptionally clear trace registered by Blue Leader at 11.40hrs on October 12. At the time the boat was in 175m of water off the north shore 3/4 of a mile south of the New Clansman hotel. This contact was the best obtained by the vessels of Operation Deepscan; Shine declared himself "more confident in that as an object than I am in anything I've had at Loch Ness *ever* – knowing the capabilities of that equipment." Sadly, however, reinvestigation by the *New Atlantis* proved this contact to be a fixed object – perhaps some equipment or a net lost by a previous expedition. Attempt to grapple for the object were unsuccessful.

Weather conditions were good throughout; traces 1–3 was recorded in a SW breeze of force 2–3, trace 4 in a flat calm. An ES discrimination of 4 and gain settings of between '3 o'clock' and '5 o'clock' (2/3 – 3/4 of the maximum) suppressed returns from weak targets and allowed project technicians to be sure that the echos recorded were not those from ordinary-sized fish.

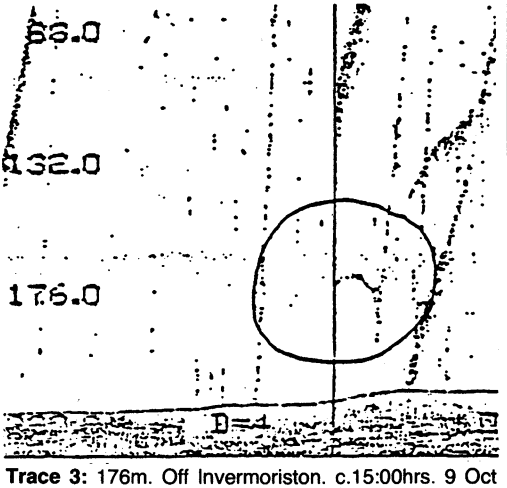
Definitive results are unlikely to be available for some time; Lowrance are still analysing the information obtained. But Shine and his associates were under intense pressure to produce easily-digestible 'results' each evening for a press conference. "There were 20 vessels all with independent records which had to be collected and assessed," the expedition leader pointed out.



Trace 1: 210m. 12:13hrs. 7 Oct 1987.



Trace 2: 190m. Off Urquhart Castle. 10:35hrs. 9 Oct 1987.

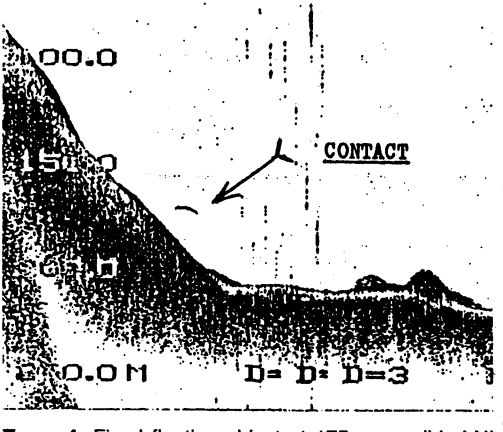


Trace 3: 176m. Off Invermoriston. c.15:00hrs. 9 Oct 1987.

It was hard to resist the temptation to give the media what it wanted, but Operation Deepscan managed it. Pressed for a comment on *Swiftech 1*'s trace, Shine replied: "I don't want to raise silly excitement until I have assessed it properly." He admitted that the contact was not a shoal of fish. Lowrance echo-sounder experts would go no further than the admission that the contacts were "equivalent in strength to a shark, but not equivalent to a whale." No prehistoric monsters there.

Members of the press corps who had nursed the naive hope that Shine would provide them with an 'answer' were irritated by this approach; many turned to filing sarcastic stories on the media circus itself. Then came the recriminations.

Journalists were upset by Shine's bluntly-conducted press conferences. He denounced the creation of a 'media monster' and (by implication) launched a thinly-veiled attack on the professional integrity of the very people who were reporting his exploits to the general public. This was un-



Trace 4: Fixed floating object at 175m, possibly LNI camera gear lost in loch. 400yds off the north shore near Urquhart Bay. 11:40hrs. 12 Oct 1987.

fortunate; early press coverage had been broadly favourable, after all, though it ranged from responsible pieces in the 'qualities' to the less-than-restrained *Sun* headline 'Loch monster is horribly ugly and has 50 babies'. "I think I upset them," the project leader admitted. "No matter what I said, it fell so far short of what they wanted. If I'm forced to speculate, a big fish was the most likely explanation and so people are saying, '*only* a fish!' But in terms of the habitat, a fish was the most reasonable explanation."

Many locals feared that Shine's low-key pronouncements would dent public interest and damage the tourist industry. Some melodramatist informed the project leader that a 'lynch mob' awaited him in Drumnadrochit. Expedition sponsors made a concerted attempt to repair the 'damage' done by Shine's press conferences; a rueful Tony Harmworth of the 'Official Loch Ness Exhibition Centre' told that press, "We wouldn't sponsor anyone who is going to squash the tourist industry, but we have to accept Adrian has these viewpoints."

The LNMP faced a somewhat hostile reaction from fellow Loch Ness researchers. Some were angry that they had not been invited to attend. Others were scathing: Steuart Campbell described the search as an absurd waste of time. US author Henry Bauer pleaded with the monster 'establishment' to stop washing its dirty linen in public,but from the Academy of Applied Science, Robert Rines called Operation Deepscan "amateur" and "rudimentary", pointing out that "there's absolutely no way from the kind of fish-finders they were using that they could have any indication at all of the size of the target. You can't say whether it's two feet. You can't say whether it's 50 feet. This equipment doesn't give you this kind of indication." His next expedition [see **FT49** p37], he hinted, was more likely to come up with the goods.

Shine himself was more positive. "You cannot kill myths with science – I have to be philosophical about that," he said. "It has been a good operation... I hope it will usher in a new perception and make the mystery more credible, but perhaps in more realistic terms."

THE GARGOYLE HEAD

While 19 boats formed a search line for the world's press, the Project's twentieth cabin cruiser – Blue 7, the underwater camera boat – was quietly detached to conduct another experiment in Urquhart Bay. Anchoring at the spot indicated by Dick Raynor, a diver associated with the 1975 Rines expedition, skipper Debbie Evans and her crew began a search for objects resembling the 'gargoyle head' photographed that year in the Bay.

According to Rines, the 'head' picture was taken in water 80 feet deep by a camera suspended well off the bottom of the loch. But the camera boat found that the depth of water at the site varied from 12 to 60 feet as it swung around its anchor **[see chart]**. And, on the bottom in 22 feet of water, it found a rotting tree stump which bore a marked resemblance to the object in Rines' photograph. Video film of the mis-shapen lump of hardwood – christened 'Ralph' by the Blue 7 crew – was enough to convince Shine that he had found the gargoyle head.

The LNMP concluded that as Rines' boat swung at anchor the camera had bounced along the bottom until it encountered the tree stump and photographed it. This hypothesis would also explain how the camera recorded a picture of the camera boat silhoutted against the surface immediately before the 'head' photograph was taken.

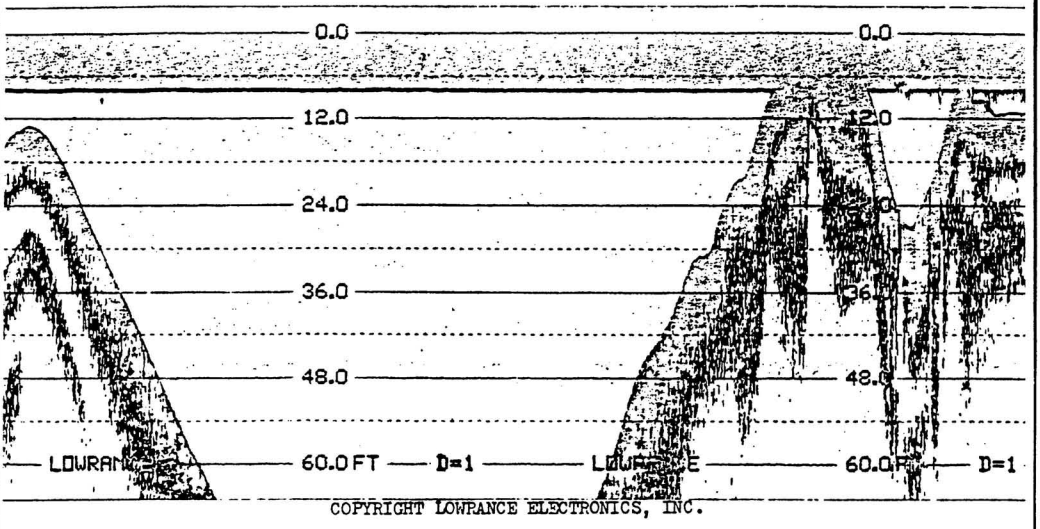
Shine's conclusion was echoed by Loch Ness researcher and TV newsreader Nicholas Witchell – who went on board the boat and declared that the object was "undoubtably" that photographed by Rines – and by LNI stalwart Ivor Newby. And having seen the film and photographed the stump itself I must admit that the resemblance is uncanny **[see picture]**.

But critics have not been slow to condemn both Shine's evidence and the manner in which his disclosures were made public. The LNMP's announcement – made at a press conference held after the second full sweep of the loch – was widely seen both as an attempt to salvage something from an unsuccessful expedition and as a direct attack on other Loch Ness researchers. Colleagues and supporters of Robert Rines – such as Ike Blonder – maintain that the 'gargoyle head' shot shows bilateral symmetry and the object it portrays must therefore be animate.

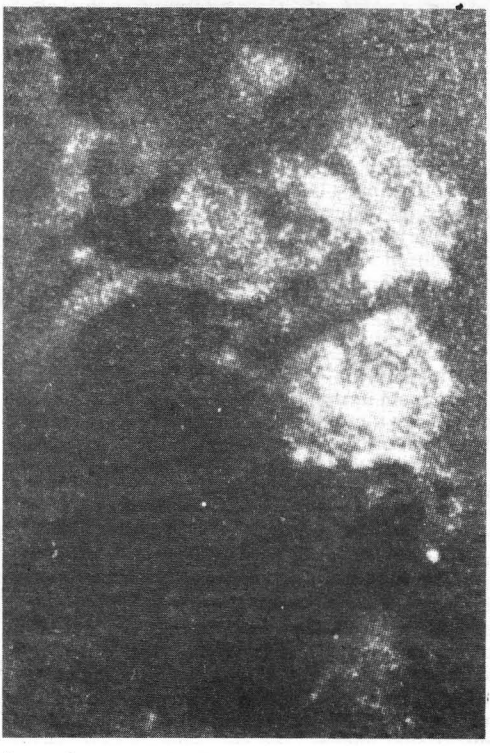
It seems likely that the Project's conclusions – when they are announced – will provide the data necessary to settle the matter with a reasonable degree of certainty. Until then, we can do no more than summarise the results of the October sweeps.

I believe that the operations of October 9 and 10 provide comfort to the Loch Ness sceptics. The sweep of October 9 produced some unexplained contacts, it is true, but none was unambiguous. It is impossible to say whether any of the targets was moving, nor is it at all easy to make reliable estimates of size. The wholly unproductive October 10 sweep probably constitutes the best negative evidence ever obtained at Loch Ness. But Operation Deepscan can hardly be said to have *disproved* the existence of the Loch Ness Monster. We are still waiting for time to tell.

Additional sources: Lowrance and Operation Deepscan press releases (on file); *Nessletter* nos.84 & 85; *Financial Times* 3 Oct; *D.Telegraph* 5 Oct; *Sun* 8 and 10 Oct; *Glasgow Herald* & *Times* & *D.Mail* & *D.Express* 10 Oct; UPI wire & *Independent* & Portsmouth *News* & *USA Today* 12 Oct; Aberdeen *Press & Journal* 13 Oct; Roanoake (VA) *Times & World-News* 14 Oct; *New Scientist* 29 Oct; Asbury Park (NJ) *Press* 1 Nov 1987.



Echo-sounder chart showing variations in depth recorded by a boat swinging from an anchor chain at the site from which the 1975 'gargoyle head' photo was obtained. Water depth varies from 12–60+ feet. Rines' account says the camera was suspended in 80ft of water.



Left: 'Ralph', the rotting tree stump salvaged by LNMP divers. Compare with Rines' photo as 'touched up' for a postcard **[right]**. [View 'Ralph' upside-down.]

THE MINCE-PIE MARTIANS

THE ROWLEY REGIS CASE

by ALFRED BUDDEN

While this is one of the strangest, if not one of the most absurd, 'close encounter' (CEIII) cases ever recorded, it must rank among the top ten of classic British cases because of ground/snow traces and the physicial, physiological and electro-magnetic after-effects. It has been called 'The Jean Hingley Contact Case': Jean being the sole percipient, who died on 23 July 1982. Brief notices appeared under the titles 'Take Me To Your Larder' (**FT28**, p.18, March 1979) and 'The Winged Beings of Bluestone Walk' (*Flying Saucer Review*, Vol.25, no.6, Nov-Dec 1979.) It was referred to at the time by investigators as 'The Case of The Mince-Pie Martians', for reasons which will become evident. The case has elements both of advanced alien technology and the magic of fairylore – a relationship explored in Vallée's *Passport to Magonia*. Under Jenny Randles' close-encounter classification it is a type A case, with no apparent time-lapse or the use of subsequent hypnosis. Two local police stations were involved, one immediately after the event, which was reported in a local paper in the first week of 1979.

I must give credit to Stephen Banks, Martin Keatman and Andy Collins who investigated the case at the time. I became involved by chance when I acquired a lengthy tape-recording of Jean relating her experience. This provided a wealth of detailed information previously unpublished, and I realised the case warrented much greater study. I began collecting information for a book, and present some of it here.

Jean Hingley was a middle-aged woman from the small town of Rowley Regis just west of Birmingham in the West Midlands of England. She worked in a factory making sound-proofing for cars, and lived with her husband and Hobo, her alsation, in Bluestone Walk, named after the stone from the surrounding quarries.

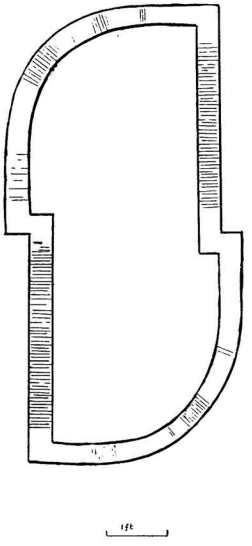
Jean was born in London, but her parents died soon afterwards and she was brought up by foster parents in the West Midlands. The local social services employed her to foster a number of children over the years. Such authorities screen temporary parents thoroughly, and Jean had never suffered from any mental illness. She was happily married for some years, had no children, and her interests were confined to the home. She was not interested in UFOs or related subjects. Though her educational background was poor, she was sharp-witted and intelligent, with a great deal of down-to-earth common sense.

THE ENCOUNTER

The morning of 4th January 1979 was bitterly cold, and snow lay on the ground. At about 6 o'clock, Jean stood with Hobo at her garden or side door, waving goodbye to her husband as he drove off to work. Turning to go back into the house, she noticed an orange glow in the car-port area, and thought that her husband had left the light on. She went down to check, and was astonished to see a large orange sphere hovering close to the car-port roof. It looked like 'a big orange' and she could feel heat on her face as she looked up at it. She hurried back to the house and stood in the doorway with Hobo, watching the object turn white, float nearer and hover over the small back-garden in front of her. Suddenly she noticed that Hobo had become stiff and paralysed. "He was like a dog frozen, like a statue." His hair was standing out in long needle-like points, his eyes had a fixed glaze, and he flopped over sideways and lay there.

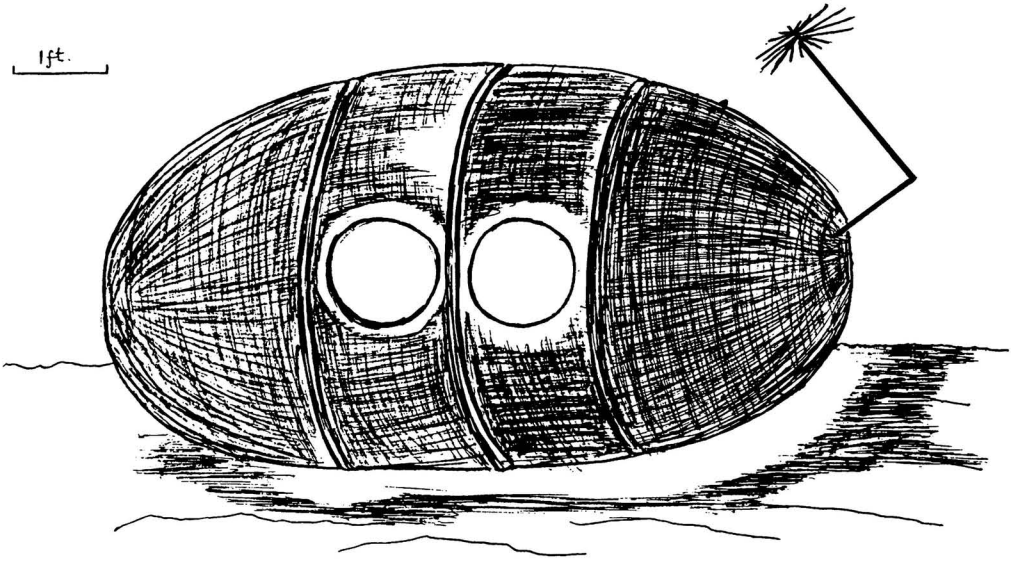
Three small figures shot past her through the doorway into the house, making a noise like "zee, zee, zee", as if there were air-displacement. The moment they 'buzzed' her she felt very cold and weak, and as if all her blood were rushing into her feet; but she was not totally paralysed like the dog. She heard the Christmas tree rattling violently and made her way to the living room where she saw two of the entities shaking it. The fairy from the top of the tree fell on the carpet. Andy Collins remarked that the entities looked rather like larger versions of this fairy.

Each 'being', as Jean referred to them, was about three and a half feet tall, and dressed in a silvery tunic with six silver buttons down the front. They had large eyes like 'black diamonds' with a glittering lustre, set into wide white faces with no nose to speak of and a simple line for the mouth. Their heads were covered by transparent helmets like 'goldfish bowls', surmounted by small lights. Their limbs were silvery-green, ending in simple tapering points with no apparent hands or feet. They had large oval 'wings' which looked as if they were made of thin, transparent paper covered with dozens of glittering multi-coloured dots, like 'braille dots'. Each 'being' was surrounded by a halo, and numerous very thin streamers hung down from their shoulders. They hovered and flew about the room with their 'arms' clasped in front of their chests, while their 'legs' hung down stiffly. Their



A – Shape and general impression of the snow ground-trace.

Mrs Jean Hingley reconstructs the offering of mince pies.
[Photo © Alfred Budden.]



B – Artist's impression of the object in the garden.

wings didn't flap like those of birds, but seemed to be for display and merely fluttered gently or occasionally folded inwards like a concertina. Their expression – "like a dead person's face" – never changed during the encounter, which lasted for about an hour.

As Jean confronted the two 'beings', she saw the third out of the corner of her eye, but found she could not turn her head, or any part of her body. She had become paralysed in an extremely ungainly pose, mouth wide open and eyes staring. Her jaw was sore and stiff for days after from being frozen in this position for so long. There was a sort of whizzing noise as the third 'being' flew over to join the others, and she felt a peculiar weightlessness. She tried in vain to speak to them. Then, "they turned towards me and they said 'Nice?' Well, I was just shocked when they spoke..." Especially as they spoke in unison, in a gruff, masculine voice. She tried to reply; "...I couldn't speak, but all of a sudden my voice came back and I said, 'Oh it's nice to see you, to see you nicely'. And I tell you I was thinking about Bruce Forsyth." (An English comedian with this as a catch-phrase). She asked them, quite naturally, where they came from; they made no reply but "all sort of flew round the room," eventually landing on the sofa in the middle and jumping up and down on it like naughty children. She told them sharply to stop, which they did.

However, whenever she tried to take control in this way, a very thin laser-like beam came from the lights on top of their helmets and focussed on her forehead just above the bridge of her nose. Though it did not shine directly into her eyes, it was dazzling and occasionally blinding. This lasted quite a while and she felt an intense burning on her forehead. At other times this beam plunged her back into paralysis. She makes numerous references to 'the beam' or 'the light'. For instance: "Every time I asked them questions they put the light on." "They kept quoting me and putting the light onto my forehead, and I said, 'Don't do that please'. But when they put the light on it wasn't so very hot. It seemed a bit cooler." "I said my eyes were sore. I kept repeating my eyes were sore, and they switched off. And I said, 'Why do you *do* that?' And they didn't tell me why, so I didn't bother them too much, because if I kept asking them, they punish with this light. And they said, 'We haven't come to harm you.' And I said, 'Well, you keep putting that light on.'"

When she had recovered slightly from the beam's effects, she found herself flying over and landing on the sofa beside them. This sounds like a typical poltergeist prank, just as the description of their voices is reminiscent of poltergeist voices. I intend to explore these parallels in my book.

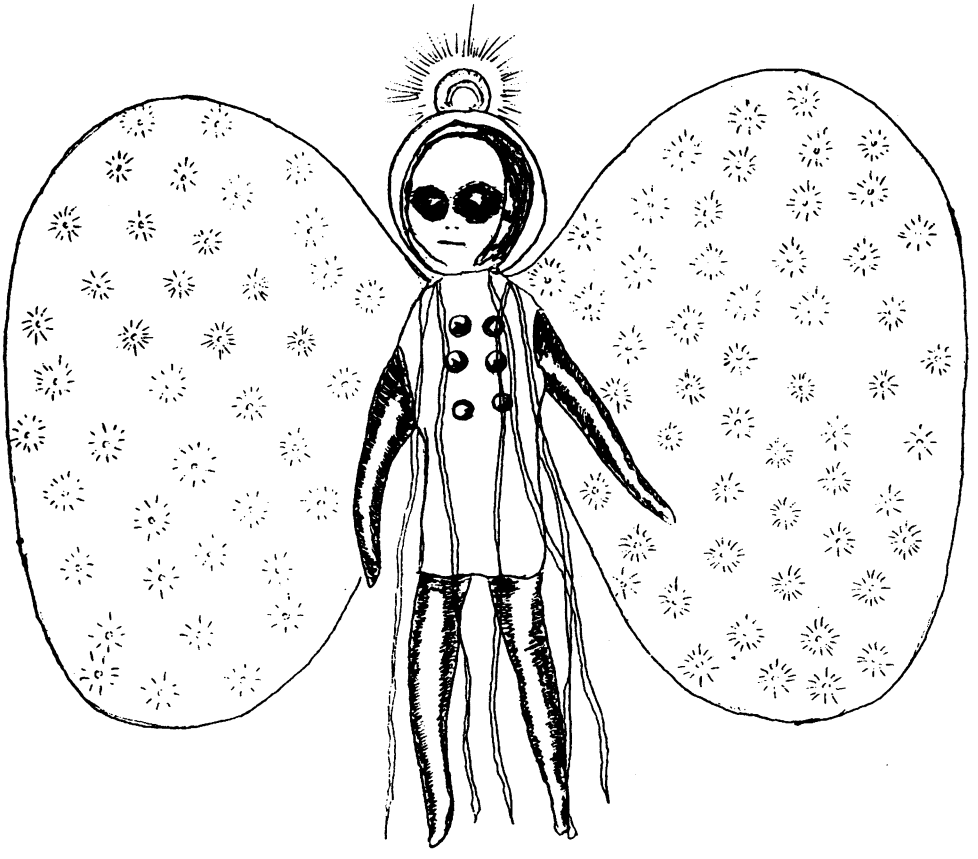
She asked them again where they came from, and this time they replied vaguely: "From the sky". They flew over to a picture of Jesus on the wall and began a long conversation with her about Jesus and his welfare, Tommy Steele, the place of the woman in the home, the Queen, children, babies, and back to Jesus again. Just as she was about to ask them if they were going to hurt her, they said suddenly "We haven't come to harm you", at which she was much relieved.

Suddenly they flew over to a table covered in newspapers and hovered above it making clicking noises. She talked to them in the same vein as before, until they began to float slowly around the room lifting up and putting down, or simply touching, small objects like cassette tapes, as if the pointed ends of their arms were magnetic. "They touched all the Christmas cards, and all the furniture...and I think they had magnets in their hands, 'cos they kept lifting things that they touched, and you know, you saw them lifting things."

Jean decided that they were looking at the bottles of drink left over from Christmas and asked if they would like some, to which they replied "Water, water, water", in unison as always. Jean complied, and found herself gliding down the hall into the kitchen. "So I got a tray, and put four glasses on a tray [one for herself, "to show it wasn't poisoned"] and I got a plate and six mince-pies. It's rude to have just enough, so I put two extra." She glided back to the living-room. "As I came near them with the metal tray, it was as much as I could do to hold it. The tray seemed magnetised towards them. Each of them lifted a glass as I lifted mine...when they saw me watching them they put the power light on...I didn't actually see them drink the water but the glasses were empty when they put them down." And in another account: "I showed them how to drink the water, and bring it up...then the beam came on, and believe you me I was blinded. Blind as a bat! And there I was, standing with my feet on the ground. I was like a statue again."

Jean seems to have been disabled by the beam whenever the entities were unable to perform certain tasks, such as drinking or answering questions. She began to regard them as robots or animated dolls with a set number of responses. If the experience were pure hallucination, there would surely be no need for such disabling of the percipient. Any comments on this from readers would be welcome.

Jean reports: "They lifted a mince-pie each as if their hands were magnetic." They seemed to be looking at the cigars and cigarettes on the table, and she asked them if they would like some. Although they refused she persisted and thought she would show them how to smoke. As she was about to light a match she was jolted by a deafening electronic 'beep' from the back garden. After recovering from the noise, she "lit the cigarette and they sort of shot back. They didn't want to, you know; they didn't like the fire, and I believe they are frightened of fire." There was an even louder noise, and on looking out the window she "saw an orange glowing thing on the back garden. It must have been a space-ship. It looked about eight feet



C – Artist's impression of one of the entities.

long by four feet high and it had glowing round windows or port-holes in it...it was covered with a sort of shining plastic...There was something like a scorpion tail at the back with a kind of wheel on top of it, but without a rim...like an old-fashioned sweep's brush" [some sort of aerial?]. "They got off the settee, and... put their hands to their sides...they didn't open their wings to go out...They lifted themselves up, and they pressed a press-stud...and they glided themselves out..."

Throughout the encounter the entities constantly touched the 'buttons' or 'press-studs' on their tunics before they spoke, and Jean concluded that this was some kind of translation device. The 'clasped' position of their arms over their chests enabled them to touch these 'buttons' quite easily. "Every word they didn't understand, they did 1-2-3 ever so fast on their chests...bleep-bleep, bleep-bleep...I said 'You'll learn a lot of things from me with that bleep-bleep'. And they said 'Yes-yes'..." Sometimes the 'bleep' was very loud, "a noise, I can't make it, but it was such a high pitch it deafened me, 'cos I had a lot of trouble with my ears a long time afterwards."

The entities sailed out of the room holding a mince-pie each, down the hall, out of the back door which had remained open throughout the encounter, and into the 'spaceship'. She watched them through the window and saw how a door appeared to slide open for them, and close behind them without trace. The 'spaceship' "lifted up from the garden ever so high...it went towards Oldbury or West Bromwich [to the north]...but before it went a blue light shone out from the 'scorpion'" [the aerial-like structure]. The whole thing pulsed with light twice, which Jean interpreted as a 'goodbye'.

The following part is, for me, the most convincing. It is spoken with such sincerity that if it were fiction we would have to conclude that Jean was a skilful actress, which of course she wasn't. "When they went, this is the saddest part now, I didn't drop carefully to the carpet; I jumped! And

then it happened. The blood rushed up, and I was in agony, pure agony. I was in pain. I didn't know where to put my arms. I squeezed myself, I was in such pain. My legs, I couldn't feel them, and then I was wobbly, and very very weak. I grabbed the table. I slid my feet along the carpet, and I got on the settee, and I didn't know how long I was there. Ooh! I was dead!"

She lay there all day until about five o'clock, when she felt sufficiently recovered to make tea for her husband. Before that she had rung her husband, and then a neighbour, and finally the police. In retrospect she realised that this was somewhat pointless: "I couldn't expect them to take fingerprints!"

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AND AFTERMATH

Exactly in the middle of the small lawn in the back garden, there was a distinct impression in the snow about eight feet long. "It was symmetrical, but most odd", said Stephen Banks. "*Not* what I would call a fabricated effect." Two parallel lines about an inch wide were traversed by a series of lines, "like a caterpillar track" [**See figure A**]. Soil samples, taken with difficulty from the frozen ground, contained more sodium than the surrounding soil. The impression in the snow melted quickly, and grass would not grow there for more than a year afterwards. The thick snow on the roof of the car-port had melted, while the surrounding area remained frozen.

There was a circle about eight inches wide scratched into the glass in the back door, which Jean insisted was not there before. The clock had stopped, and the TV ceased to work properly. It seemed to have been effected by an intense magnetic field. The radio ceased to function. It had been playing when the encounter began, but Jean reported that "it just went dead. Everything went dead and quiet." The casette tapes handled by the entities were so distorted that they were ruined. About two weeks after the event a colleague at work noticed that Jean's wedding ring had turned white. "White on the outside," said Jean, "gold on the inside."

Jean's eyes were sore for about a week after the encounter and she was obliged to wear dark glasses. Her inner ear was painful, and she reported: "My jaws ached for days afterwards because of standing, staring open-mouthed with shock when the beings first came." Her general feeling of bodily well-being was so disturbed that her doctor gave her two weeks off work. She began to suffer from severe headaches. A red mark on her forehead persisted for months, and became more prominent when the headaches developed. A small mole developed in the centre of this mark.

The only references to the after-effects on the dog are these: "I said, 'Are you alright, boy?' And he looked at me ever so queer. And I thought he'd go for me, but he didn't. He just wobbled. And I gave him some water, and he drank a lot." And: "Later, my husband said, 'A funny thing, when you're talking to anybody about them [the entities], Hobo goes into a sort of trance.'"

Andy Collins reported that a few days after the encounter the Christmas tree vanished from the living room. Two days later it reappeared in pieces in the back garden, minus its decorations, which were mostly green and silver tinsel. These gradually reappeared, over several days, just outside the garden.

COMMENTARY

Reseachers have tended to divide this case into two parts: external/physical and internal/mental or hallucinatory. The object and its effects on the house, garden, dog and Jean herself were thus seen as more 'real' than Jean's interaction with the entities. Indeed, her painful physiological experiences at the beginning and end of the encounter do seem to indicate an altered state of consciousness, which fits in nicely with the fashionable theory that unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) or 'earthlights' trigger waking dreams. The geology of the area with its igneous faulting and quarries seems to support this interpretation, but the symmetrical ground trace remains a puzzle. And were those laser-like beams external or internal? Intense mental events *can* produce physical effects, like the red mark and mole on Jean's forehead. We have only to think of poltergeist outbreaks and stigmata. There have been experiments where a polt 'focus-person' has been capable of producing psychokinetic effects under hypnosis. *Perhaps the altered state triggered by UFO contact facilitates physical RSPK effects which are incorporated into the encounter in various 'appropriate' ways.*

I propose that contentious physical traces associated with UFO encounters might be produced in the same way – whatever *that* is – as poltergeist effects. Ufologists should draw on the great wealth of physical and perceptual evidence gathered over many years by researchers into polt outbreaks. Are UFOs apports of some kind, or indeed created by psychokinesis? Were Jean's entities physical and 'PK–constructed' in the same way that clothing and other materials have taken bizarre humanoid form in certain polt episodes?

I am not saying the domestic poltergeist is identical with the UFO phenomenon, but merely that certain types of UFO encounter seem to be in the same 'family' as RSPK phenomena. However, I do wonder if part of the stimulus for the UFO phenomenon is a reality created *unconsciously* by 'focus–people' or 'mediums' who are also prone to the 'normal' range of psi events. The UFO experience can make witnesses psychic or even 'mediumistic'. If any reader is interested in this approach and is willing to pursue it objectively, I would be glad to hear from them.

WEIRD LIVES No. 4: by PAUL SIEVEKING

SAINT ROGER
OR, THE SONG OF THE HERMIT CRAB

"God hath promised [..] to make me a strong witness against all Abominations [..] my Name is called upon the Whores account [i.e. by the Church, the Whore of Babylon], *Roger Crab*, or Mr *Crab*, or sometimes Devil, Rogue or Witch; but my Name in the Book of Life is without Letter or form; and so I sing." **[1]**

Crab was born in Buckinghamshire around 1621. He tells us his mother had £20 a year, else his father would not have married her. **Gordon (1887)** states, on what evidence I don't know, that it was in about 1641 that he renounced meat. In *The English Hermite* (1655), he quoted I *Corinthians* VIII,13: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." He became a strict vegan and teetotaller. "His constant food," he tells us on the title page of the above work, "is Roots and Hearbs, as Cabbage, Turneps, Carrets, Dock Leaves, and Grasse; also Bread and Bran, without Butter or cheese".

In 1642 the Civil War broke out, and Crab joined the Parliamentary army, in which he served seven years. Once his skull was "cloven to the braine"**[2]**, "which", according to Gordon, " may account for some of his later eccentricities". Nineteenth century writers regarded him literally as a crackpot. **Chambers (1864)** dismisses him as "among the many crazy sectaries produced from the yeasty froth of the fermenting cauldron of the great civil war." Crab tells us that he was "sentenced to death in the Field by my Lord Protector", and was imprisoned for two years by Parliament. "Punishments of such severity", wrote **Hill (1958)** "can only have been for political offences, and it may be suspected that Crab was involved in the Leveller agitation of 1647-9." "All those things wrought together for the best in me", he wrote. He became a thorough pacifist, misquoting Isaiah XXI,2: "A grievous vision was shewed unto me, the transgressor against the transgressor, and the destroyer against the destroyer."

Leaving the army about 1649, Crab set up as a "haberdasher of hats" in Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Hill is puzzled by the proverb *as mad as a hatter*. "No obvious reason suggests itself why this trade should render men especially liable to insanity", he wrote, and went on to suggest that the phrase derives from the example of Crab. However, it is widely known that the ancient process of carroting or *secretage*, where the pairings and cuttings from furriers intended for felting **[3]** and the making of hats are treated with a solution of mercuric nitrate, can lead to mercuric poisoning. The acute symptoms of this, besides gastro–intestinal inflammation, vomiting, haemorrhaging, anaemia, shakes, nutritional disturbances, loose teeth etc, include a lack of concentration, which could be seen as 'madness'. I don't know whether Crab did his own carroting; but there is no record that he suffered from any of the above symptoms.

Incidentally, there is good reason to believe that Lewis Carroll suggested to Tenniel that his drawing of the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland* should resemble a furniture dealer near Oxford, one Theophilus Carter, known as the Mad Hatter because he always wore a top hat and invented an "alarm clock bed" that woke the sleeper by tossing him out on the floor. This was exhibited at the Crystal Palace in 1851 (**Gardner 1960**). All of which has absolutely nothing to do with Roger Crab – probably.

Crab "came to know God in nature", as did Gerrard Winstanley the Digger. This came about through ornithomancy: "Therefore the most high was pleased to convince me [of the truth of Scripture] with naturall formes, namely birds of the Aire, which every day brought me intelligence according to my worldly occasions; for almost three years space I have observed them, for they would foretell me of any danger or crosse, or any joy from friends; I mean any danger or dishonour to my person, or losse of cattell, or corne, or any other disadvantage to my advancement in the world; and this cleerly convinced me, that there was a power above man."

Taking the advice of Jesus (Mark X,21): "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven", Crab sold his "considerable Estate" in about 1651 and gave everything to the poor, keeping just enough to lease "a small roode of ground" at Ickenham near Uxbridge, Middlesex, for 50 shillings a year, where he dwelt as a hermit in "a mean cottage of his own building", though **Kirby (1803)** has him "living in a cave". He wore "a sackcloth frock, and no band on his neck" (the equivalent of a tie). Naturally, all good Christians thought him mad.

After he had become a hermit, Crab had a mystical illumination which changed his life. "When I was in my Earthly Garden a digging with my Spade, with my face to the East side of the Garden, I saw into the Paradise of God from whence my father Adam was cast forth; this sight drave me

oftener into the Garden, so that I saw in a Mysterie the Tree of Life, and also the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, which I a long time had lived in, [..] the Serpent having before hid my desires in the Tree of Knowledge, and thought I had been safe enough in his Kingdom of Dust..."

He managed to live on three farthings a week, eating his own vegetables and foraging for wild food. Soul and body, he thought, are separate entities, which can be divided in life as they will be after death. True happiness lay in making the body subject to the soul. Like Saint Francis, he combined extreme asceticism with a friendly but detached attitude to the body, which he called "the old man". He describes how he compelled his body to accept the strict diet:

"*The law of the old man in my fleshly members rebelled against the law of my mind*, and had a shrewd skirmish; but the mind being well enlightned, held it, so that the old man grew sick and weak with the fluxe, like to fall to the dust; but the wonderful love of God well pleased with the Battle, raised him up againe, and filled him full of love, peace, and content in mind, and [he] is now become more humble; for now he will eate Dock–leaves, Mallows, or Grasse." **Gordon (1887)** states that this was his *only* diet, which is perhaps an exaggeration. Most commentators, Hill included, tend to caricature Crab. "The man was simply insane", asserts **Chambers (1864)**; while **Caulfield (1813)** says "he seems to have destroyed himself by eating [..] trash." He did, however, live to be nearly 60.

Crab would have been familiar with Nebuchadnezzar's diet of grass, forced on him by Jehovah (Daniel IV,33), but not with Milarepa's freely–chosen nettle regimen which purportedly turned him green. The anonymous publisher of Crab's autobiographical *English Hermite* says in his introduction: "He is the more to be admired that he is alone in this opinion of eating, which though it be an error, it is an harmlesse error." However, he goes on to mention that it killed a Captain Norwood, who served in the army with Crab, and was converted to his diet. In the early 1650s, according to **Muggleton (1699)**, the Ranter John Robins, who thought he was God Almighty, prescribed a diet of vegetables and water for his diciples, many of whom died of it.

Though he had dropped out of society, Crab remained a fierce radical: God "hath tried almost every Sort of Men, and every Sort of Sects" in the Government, and all were found wanting. "All our proprieties are but the fruits of God's curse." Property "hath caused the Murderer to kill, and the Thief to steal,and the Deceitful Lyar to lye.". The Church was the "House of the Whores Merchandise" and the "old JADE". The real house of God was "the House made without hands, the sanctified body of men and women". Quakers and Levellers were "hireling priests", the clergy "Pimps and Pondors [panders]", "frothy bores", while Oxford and Cambridge were "the Whores great eyes". Marriage was a travesty where priests "bargain and swop like Horse–Coursers".

> "Such are our lusts and covetousnesse,
> The belly and backe to please;
> With selling and buying, dissembling and lying,
> Yet we cannot live at ease;
> But still in discontent abide,
> Desiring after more:..."

He discussed his opinions "with all Sexes [sects] and Ministers in most Counties in England". The anonymous introduction to *The English Hermite* states that "he approves of civil Magistracy, and is neither for the Levellers, nor Quakers nor Shakers nor Ranters, but above Ordinances."

Although he considered astrologers, sorcerers and wizards to be "the spirits of darknesse" which will "reach no further than the old man in the flesh", he twice consulted the astrologer John Lilly, according to records in the Ashmolean (**Thomas 1971**), and stated that "my body was governed by the inclination of my Constitution from the starry heavens". "His reputation for sanctity and abstinence was such", wrote **Lemprière (1808)**, "that he was visited by many respectable persons, who consulted him as a seer and prophet. He is said to have foretold the restoration, and the elevation of the house of Orange to the British throne."

He also "administered physick": "I have had a hundred or sixe–score Patients at once", he wrote. He told the "wounded and feverish" to lay off "flesh and strong beere", and was also against onions and garlic. Hill tells us he was much sought after by women. Godbold (or Godbolt), the minister of Uxbridge, told the people of Chesham he was a witch; and he thanks the minister in *The English Hermite*'s Dedication for having helped him conquer "the old man" by slagging him off.

Wilson (1806) portrays a very saintly Crab. "Before he was twenty–six [i.e. in about 1647] he purchased an estate, and was one of the richest tradesmen in all Chesham". While he was still a hatter, "both day and night he was seen praying either behind his counter, or in any other place in which he happened to be." He then gave everything away, and carried non–violence to the extremes of the Jains: "He alledged, that we have no right to be either fed or cloathed from the spoils of other creatures and that the very gnat we tread upon feels as strong a pang in the agonies of death as a man [..] Every animal he saw in distress he flew to relieve. He frequently gave a halfpenny to release a poor bird from his captivity.[..] His food was gathered from the spontaneous produce of the neighbouring fields, and the first spring afforded him drink. His dress was [..] a sack–cloth–frock and a course pair of breeches open at the knees." When he exceeded his "usual allowance" of three farthings, "it never was [by] more than one farthing.[..] Seeing one day a young couple going to be

Roger Crab *that feeds on Herbs and Roots is here;*
But I believe Diogenes had better Cheer.

Rara avis in terris.

Deep things more I have to tell, but I shall now forbear,
Lest some in wrath against me swell & do my body tear.

Published 1813 by R.S. Kirby from a contemporary drawing.

married, he was much pleased. 'I had rather', cried he, 'give one being existence than be the king of England; do you increase and multiply.'" I have not discovered whether or not this portrait is based on some informed contemporary account.

Crab was constantly getting into trouble for breaking the Sabbath, "this notorious Idol which they have set up in our Nation, I mean the Priests Market–Day". He lacked "a sute of Clothes kept purposely for that Market–day". He maintained that "Gods Sabbath hath lasted ever since the Creation." Furthermore, since God has left work and is at rest, as they say, it is "a vain babling and a cheat for any to take money to pray and beg of God to do any thing for us now." He objected to being unable to buy a Bible on the Sabbath, when one could "give three times the worth of it to hear a Priest make one hour's discourse out of it."

The country justices had him up twice for Sabbath breaking, and twice offered a pardon for five shillings: but he preferred to be scourged and put in the stocks. While suffering this punishment, he composed a few verses, which included:

"When I was a digging Parsnips for my Meals
Then I discovered these cheats,
For which I sate six hours by the heels
At Itnam [Ickenham] Whorehouse Gate."

"In his old age", writes Hill, "he allowed himself the delicacy of parsnips." However, he was only in his early 30s at this time.

At the end of 1654 he came to London, staying with a glover called Carter in Whitecross Street, to arrange the printing of *THE ENGLISH HERMITE, or, Wonder of this AGE*, in which he described "his strange reserved and unparallel'd kind of life". He was brought before the authorities at Hick's Hall for working on the Sabbath and was committed to Clerkenwell prison on 17 January 1655; his keeper ordered the other prisoners not to give him any bread with his water, "and shut him down in the hole all night." In the prison yard the next morning, a spaniel followed him round with a piece of bread, and laid it in his hand.

He was again in London in September 1657, to print *Dagons–Downfall*, and again he was brought up at Hick's Hall. Again he preferred the stocks to the five shilling pardon. One JP said his sin was against both God and man. "So I would not give half a crown in vain, but I told them, Here was the old man's Heels, if he would punish him he might for both half Crowns, one for God and the other for man."

The 1640s and 50s were a golden age of 'small presses', and many strange and enthusiastic writers found their way into print, under pithy, trenchant and often colourful titles. Crab's readers would have been familiar with Dagon's downfall (I *Samuel,* chapter 5). An angry Jehovah dismembers the idol of Dagon, god of the Philistines, in punishment for the theft of His Ark of the Covenant. "Only the stump of Dagon was left to him." Dagon was a "Sea Monster, upward Man and downward Fish" [4] Furthermore, the "hand of God was very heavy" on the Philistines; those that weren't killed were smote with emerods (piles). I recommend this bizarre gothic war story, especially in the sonorous verse of the Authorised version. My family Bible of 1823 says it all happened in 1,141 BC.

In 1657, according to Hill, Crab moved his hermitage to Bethnal Green, (which of course was in the depths of the country in those days), and in his final 23 years he doesn't seem to have been harassed by the authorities. Already, back in 1655, he had written:

"If men and Angels do prove silent, then
Why should not I, an inferiour man:
Now am I silent, and indite no more,
Pray use no Violence then against the poor."

Something of Crab's mysticism can be glimpsed in his comments on King David calling upon the Lord: "Not that he thought that God was up in the clouds, or asleep in a bed; but he knew that there was a Talent of God hid in a Napkin, or in the Earth within him, which Talent must be raised up or discovered by throwing off the corruptions of his minde, that is to undo himself, and throw away all his own Works, that his Grain of Mustard–seed may grow, and come to be a Day–Star in the heart..." [5]

John Strype (1720) remarked: "This Crab, they say, was a Philadelphian, a sweet singer." *Sweet singer* was roughly equivalent to *ranter*. The Philadelphians had begun to emerge about 1670 around 'Dr' John Pordage, rector of Bradfield, Jane Leade and others. Richard Baxter, who described Pordage as chief of the 'Behmenists', or English followers of Jacob Boehme, knew of him through a young man, probably the Ranter Abiezer Coppe, who in 1649 was living under Pordage's roof in a "family communion", the members "aspiring after the highest spiritual state" through "visible and sensible communion with angels." (**Gordon 1896**).

Other house guests at Bradfield included Theaureaujohn (Thomas Tany), who "laid about him with a drawn sword at the Parliament House" a week after the move to offer the title of king to Cromwell; and "one Everard" , probably William Everard the Digger. In 1651, Theaureaujohn had been indicted for blasphemy with a Captain Robert Norwood, possibly the same Norwood as Crab's ill–fated diciple. Pordage was accused in the mid–1650s of saying that God was in every man, that the saints would take over the estates of the wicked for themselves, and the wicked should be their slaves, and that he cared no more for the higher powers than the dust beneath his feet (**Hill 1958**).

The Philadelphians grew out of the extreme antinomian and communistic sect known as The Family of Love, inaugurated by certain Dutch Anabaptists, which had been a thorn in the flesh of the British establishment ever since the middle of the previous century. On the accession of Queen

Elizabeth in 1558, Archbishop Parker (the original 'nosy parker') wrote that "the realm is full of Anabaptists, Arians, Libertines, Free–will men", etc. The 38th Article of the Church of England states: "The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast."

Moses had taught law, Christ had taught faith, and the mission of the Family of Love, or Familists, superior to both, was to teach love **[6]**. They "were perfectionists, envisaging that man could attain a holy state in this existence. They were a powerful influence upon the Quakers, and barely distinguishable from some of the Ranters...[Boehme's] mysticism was founded upon the ancient doctrines of microcosm and macrocosm, and his thought, like that of Swedenborg after him, preserved important elements of the hermetic tradition." (**Thomas 1971**).

Roger Crab died in Bethnal Green on 11 September 1680, in his 60th year, and was buried on 14 September, in St Dunstan's and All Saints, Stepney. **Wilson (1806)** maintained that he "carried oeconomy and simplicity to a criminal excess, for he thereby shortened his life [..] Some thought he was starved, by being too weak to go in quest of his usual diet, or that a supply of bread which he received from the town weekly had failed." However, to reach 59 was no mean achievement in the 17th century.

St Dunstan's, aligned with St Paul's and the Temple church, is the mother church of all East–end parishes. At this time, the parish included Bethnal Green, along with Shadwell, Whitechapel, Wapping, Poplar, Bow, St Georges, Spitalfields and Limehouse. An old tradition had it that all children born at sea belonged to Stepney parish (**Thornbury 1873**). On the day after Crab's death, a great naval battle was seen in the sky in Monmouthshire (see **Portents of 1680–81** on page **50**). Whether all this has any significance I cannot fathom.

"A very handsome tomb was erected to [Crab's] memory in the churchyard at this place; which being decayed, the ledger–stone was placed in the pathway leading across the church–yard to Whitehorse–street, where it still remains, but the inscription is almost defaced." (**Lysons 1795**). On a visit in 1984, I was unable to find any trace of it. John Strype published a transcription in 1720:

Tread gently, Reader, near the Dust,
Committed to this Tomb–stone's Trust.
For while 'twas Flesh, it held a Guest,
With universal Love possest.
A Soul that stemm'd Opinion's Tyde,
Did over Sects in Triumph ride.
Yet separate from the giddy Crowd,
And Paths Tradition had allow'd.
Through good and ill Reports he past;
Oft censur'd, yet approv'd at last.
Wouldst thou his Religion know?
In brief 'twas this: To all to do
Just as he would be done unto.
So in kind Nature's Law he stood,
A Temple undefil'd with Blood:
A Friend to ev'ry Thing that's good.
The rest, Angels alone can fitly tell:
Haste, then, to Them and Him; and so farewel.
[7]

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NOTES

● **[1]** *Dagons–Downfall* p19. ● **[2]** *The English Hermite.* ● **[3]** Felting was supposedly discovered by St Clement, who became its patron saint. ● **[4]** Milton: *Paradise Lost* (1650–63), book 1, line 462. ● **[5]** *Dagons–Downfall* p13. ● **[6]** Sects teaching Anabaptist/Familist doctrine sprang up in many countries. In Spain, the Alombrados, or Illuminati, about 1575, rejected sacraments, proclaimed that sin was imaginary and that prayer made good works unnecessary. The Inquisition burned many at Cordova; but the sect revived until suppressed again in 1623. Another group of 'Illuminati' arose in Picardy in 1634 and was crushed by Louis XIII. The name *Illuminati* was revived in Bavaria by Adam Weishaupt in 1777. ● **[7]** Stow: Vol 2, Appx.1, p99. I have departed from the transcription in three places, in accordance with all subsequent versions: line 2 – *cometh* for *committed* is surely an error; line 11 – *wouldst* scans better than *wouldest*; line 17 – *fitly can tell* avoids the split infinitive, but spoils the metre.

PORTENTS OF 1680-81

The illustration opposite come from a broadsheet "Printed for *P.Brooksby*, at the *Golden–Ball*, near the *Hospital–Gate*, in *West–Smithfield,* 1681", called [..] **Signs of Strange Times; or, A Word in Season to a Sinking Kingdom [..] All happening in the Year 1680.** etc. (Remember that the Old Style year ran from March to the end of February.)

The following portents are not given an exact date:

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE, in Malaga, Spain, lasting three quarters of an hour. Several dead, 50 houses and some churches destroyed.

THE 3 DEAD TOWER–LYONS. The death, close together, of the three lions in the Tower of London: Old Charles's, the Queen's and the Duke of York's. A previous portent of this kind happened in the reign of Henry VI ("as *Baker* recordeth") preceding the Wars of the Roses.

THE WHALE. A large whale, 50 feet long and 28 "in thickness" beached by the River Wenner near Colchester, that died from loss of blood after breaking off its tail while struggling, turning the waters red.

THE SHOWRE OF WHEAT is not mentioned in the text; but there is an (un–illustrated) description of "a fiery Flying *Bullet*" [ball lightning?] reported from Rostock on 16 January 1680, followed by an hour–long whirlwind that shattered houses and sent people flying.

THE GREAT HAIL–STONES. 18 May 1680. A violent hour–long thunderstorm, with hailstones up to seven inches round, "formed in divers shapes as Crownets, Myters, Men and Horse &c.", witnessed by thousands in London and elsewhere. People hurt, skylights broken, birds and cattle killed.

THE FIGHT OF SHIPS. 12 September 1680. A naval battle in the sky witnessed by a clergyman and several others near Porsnet in Monmouthshire, followed by a land battle on an aerial meadow, all accompanied by the noise of battle and the groans of the dying.

THE THREE SUNS SEEN. 20 December 1680. A parahelion lasting half an hour, two hours after sunrise in Shropshire. There had been previous portents of this kind before the death of Thomas à Beckett and at the opening of Mary I's reign.

THE ARMIES IN THE AIR. 27 December 1680. An aerial battle near Ottery near Exeter, about 5 in the evening, witnessed by a clergyman and several others. A previous portent of this kind preceded the "late Rebellion" [the Civil War].

THE RIVER DRY'D. 25 January 1681. The sudden drying up of the River Wye and its tributaries on the Welsh borders, stranding many fish which were gathered up, followed several hours later by slight flooding.

THE COMET AND THE DART. A large comet, covering 30 degrees of the horizon and 3 degrees wide, was immediately followed on 27 February 1681 by a fiery dart or "perpendicular Stream of Fire", which was seen twice afterwards, each time for less than two hours.

A Word in Season to a Sinking Kingdom.

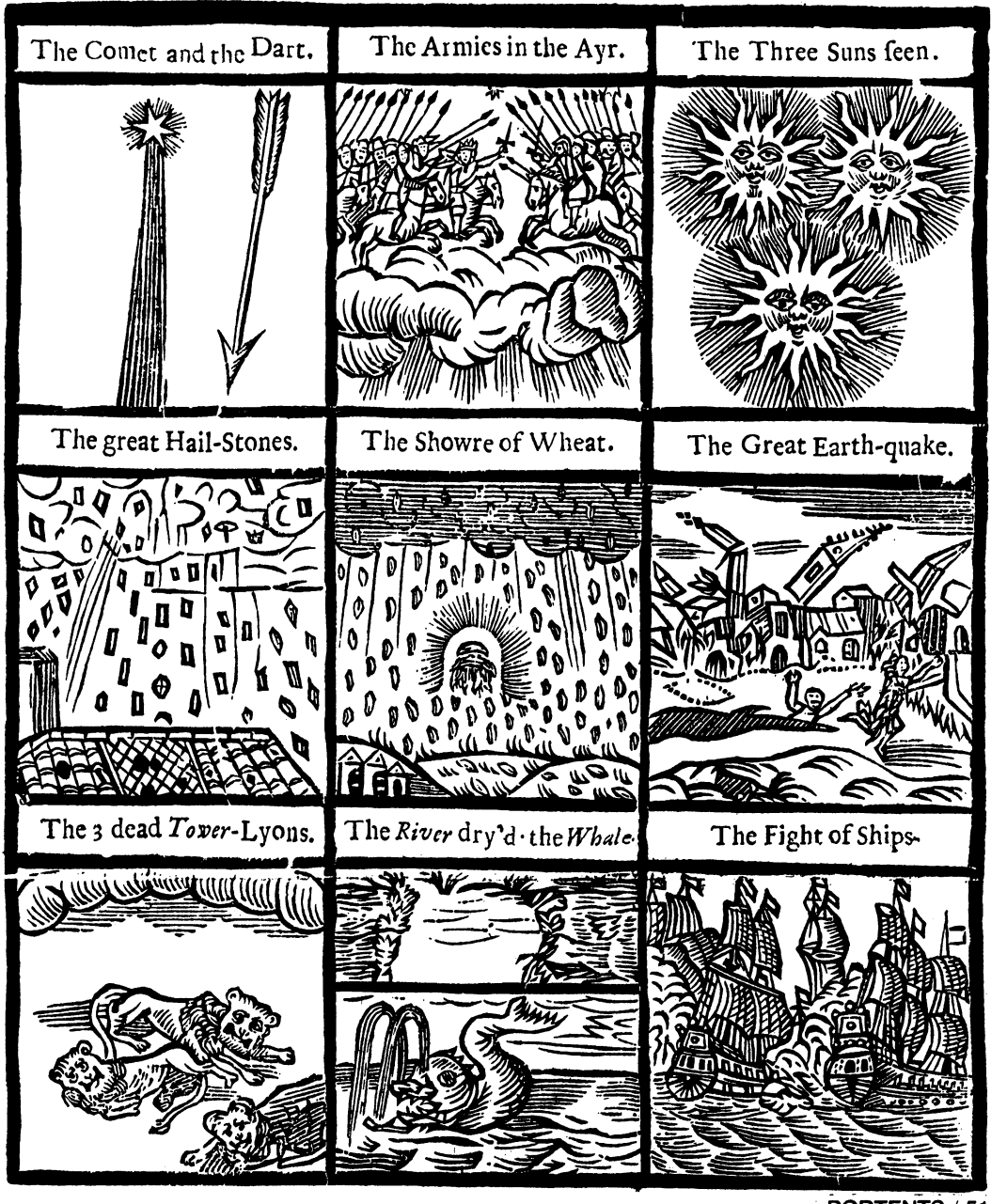
Being Strange Signs and VVonders that have lately Happened in the

AYR, in the EARTH, and on the WATERS

of *England*, and other places of *Europe* in these Kingdoms; All happening in the Year 1680.

VVith some Observations upon them: in Relation to what they may Prognosticate:

Being not only the Opinions of several Learned Astrologers, but of Godly and Experienc'd Ministers of the Gospel, &c.


The Comet and the Dart.
The Armies in the Ayr.
The Three Suns seen.
The great Hail-Stones.
The Showre of Wheat.
The Great Earth-quake.
The 3 dead *Tower*-Lyons.
The *River* dry'd · the *Whale*
The Fight of Ships.

HANDS ON FIRE

by M. RICHOND DES BRUS (1827)

This early discussion of SHC is a translation by Roger Richard and Val Stevenson of *'Sur les combustions spontanées, et Observation d'une combustion des deux mains chez un jeune homme de vingt–quatre ans'* by M. Richond des Brus, published in the *Annales de la Société d'Agriculture du Puy*, 1827, pp.94–112.

Gentlemen,
It has always been difficult for physicians to explain satisfactorily the spontaneous combustions occurring in haystacks, heaps of old rags, coal, cotton or wool, combustions with often deplorable results, threatening, on various occasions, the very existence of businesses in the port of Brest. It has been even more difficult for physiologists to explain those taking place within the living human body, as they seem contrary to the laws of ordinary physics. All their efforts have, as yet, been useless, and I think we will have to admit that the problem remains unsolved.

Spontaneous human combustions have long been documented **[1]**, but as they have not been observed in large enough numbers to attract doctors' attention, some of these anomalous phenomena have been treated as fables or miracles. In a few cases the deaths of the victims of these happenings have been attributed to criminal acts, and, in the early 18th century, two presumed murderers were executed **[2]**. Such errors are not possible nowadays: numerous facts have been collated and published, and the studies made by Lecat, Vic d'Azyr, Lair, Koop, Marc and Fodéré have fully demonstrated the existence of spontaneous human combustion [SHC].

These facts are no less marvellous for being true. People who were perfectly normal and in excellent health have suddenly caught fire and been turned rapidly into oily cinders or black and fetid soot, leaving chairs, tables, floors and all the wooden articles around them unscathed or only slightly damaged. We know that our forefathers had to use an enormous amount of combustible material to get the ashes they kept so carefully and religiously and that often, even though the most resinous woods (pine, yew or larch) were used in the crematoria, the bones could not be turned entirely into ashes, as is indicated by calling funeral urns 'ossaria'.

Why does the human body burn in some circumstances? As a lot of SHC victims had been drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, a few doctors, chief amoung whom must rank Lair, have supposed that various parts of the body had been so saturated with alcohol and developed such a degree of combustibility, that they could actually catch fire. This theory was rightly discarded for the following valid reasons. Firstly, alcohol is altered when digested, and only reaches the bloodstream after transformation and incorporation into other matter. Secondly, alcohol has such a chemical attraction for water that it would soon be weakened and watered down in going through the body, becoming incombustible.

Dr Marc's theory seems, at first sight, to have more grounds, but is no more logical than Dr Lair's. He thinks that old age, intemperance, indolence, etc., can create asthenia, or general weakening, which, by reducing the absorption rate of the blood vessels, favours the accumulation of hydrogen in the body to such an extent that it can cause complete combustion if ignited internally or externally. He also thinks that the phenomena accompanying SHC point to hydrogen as the only possible explanation.

I would reply to Dr Marc that it has not been proven that old age, etc., create a *general* asthenia and that, even if we take this asthenia for granted, it is not proven that it reduces the action of the blood vessels. Thirdly, reduced absorption of the blood vessels does not explain the production of hydrogen: indeed, this gas does not exist as such in the human body; it is combined with carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, etc.. Only if the human machine could be returned to its basic elements could hydrogen be produced, which is not the case in asthenia. If we allow M.Marc his theory, we must ask ourselves why SHC does not occur in people who suffer from scurvy, scrofula, phthisis, dropsy, and severe wounds which debilitate particular parts of the body; I do not know of combustion hastening the death of the unfortunates who suffer from these afflictions.

There are, however, two strong arguments which must be put forward: if gas can be produced in the body, as water is in the case of dropsy, surely the parts of the body containing the gas should be swollen, stretched and dilated? If, on the other hand, it is the ignited hydrogen which causes the combustion, should there not be an explosion when it is set on fire? In the *Mémoires de l'Academie des Sciences* of 1751 we find that this is what happened in the case I now relate. "A Neufchâtel butcher cut open an ox which had been in a poor state of health for a long time and was quite distended; an explosion occurred, and a sheet of flame shot up more than five feet in the air, wounding the butcher and a little girl near him." What we have here is the

spontaneous combustion of phosphoretted hydrogen: the animal was swollen and there was an explosion. Neither of these phenomena has been observed in the numerous SHC victims. Finally, the majority were not asthenic when they caught fire.

In most cases of SHC that have come under scrutiny, the main cause of the accident was contact with a burning substance. In a few instances this contact did not exist, and the combustion was really spontaneous. Could an electric spark be produced in the body? That theory is accepted by Lecat, Koop, Marc, Fodéré and other eminent doctors, and some facts, although not conclusive, make this a possibility. There are some people who live more or less permanently electrified: Brydoine, the traveller, tells of a woman whose hair gave off electric sparks every time it was combed; the American senator Daylon noticed sparks when taking off his socks at night; Daniel Horstius told of a man who could rub his legs after an attack of gout and make them glow; Cardon, in the *Nouveau Dictionnaire de Médicine*, mentions a White Friar whose hair gave off sparks when he drew his scapula back over his shoulders, and maybe we should include young Ascanius whose name has been immortalised by Virgil's sublime poetry.

We know the story of the priest Bertholi who, while reading his breviary after a long walk, felt a sudden pain in his arm, as if he had been struck with a stick, and saw that his arm had caught fire.

If all these examples point to electricity as the main cause of the accidents, they do not throw any light on the essential point, viz. the cause of this extraordinary phenomenon. History does not show that any person manifesting electrical phenomena has died from SHC, and I know of no torpedo rays, sheat–fish or electric eels catching fire spontaneously.

The explanation of SHC has not yet been found, and the problem is unsolved. Let us now see if we can make the two following cases fit into the aforementioned theories.

FIRST OBSERVATION

M.Dessimont, a 24–year–old man of medium height and build with thick black hair, sanguine, in good health and a tee–totaller, went to church in Le Puy on the evening of 19th April 1827. He did not stay there very long, as he felt too hot, so he retired to his brother's house near the Pannessec city gates. Around half past nine, as his brother was burning a lump of sulphur over a candle, a few drops of the liquified burning sulphur dripped onto his fingers, and, when he shook his hands in pain, some fell on his coat and set it alight. When he yelled for help, M.Dessimont, who was busying himself a few feet away, ran to him and managed to put out the flame by squeezing the burning coat in his hands. His brother had burnt two fingers and a hole in his coat. M.Dessimont, however, had hardly realised that his brother was out of danger when he felt severe pain in his hands; he cried out, and Mdme Ginhoux, running up to him, saw that his hands were covered with flames: they were burning like candles, she told me, with a bluish flame.

Their first thought was that the flame was being produced by the sulphur, and they tried in vain to put it out with cold water. A poultice made from flour and oil was hastily made, but the fire got worse. Dessimont went down to a cutler's shop in the same building and soaked his hands in the slush under the grindstone; it was not a great relief. Finally, after half an hour of intolerable pain, he asked someone to open the door for him and he ran to my office. During this flight both he, and Mdme Ginhoux who was with him, saw quite clearly a flame that was bright enough to light the way. At the frantic ringing of the bell, I hurried downstairs. The door was hardly open when M.Dessimont, wild–eyed, scarlet–faced and with a look of despair, rushed past me shrieking "Quickly, sir, put something on my hands, I'm on fire, I'm burning! Look, I'm burning!" and he showed me his hands; they were very red and swollen, and a sort of steam or smoke was coming off them.

He could hardly stay still for two minutes to tell me the cause of his accident; he was moving all the time, cursing my slowness in taking care of him. As bathing in cold liquid is the best remedy in such cases, I told him to go to the fountain opposite the house and to keep his hands immersed until he felt better, and to get some cold baths ready for the night; then he fled towards the fountain. When he said "I'm burning, I'm on fire", I did not take him literally; I took it as a metaphorical description of the pain he was feeling, and did not follow him as I surely would have done if I had understood him better. It was only the following day that I got the details of his adventure, to my great amazement. M.Dessimont assured me that he had only felt relief as long as he kept his hands in the fountain, when the flames went out, and that he had been able to run for a certain time without being able to see the flames, but after about 150 steps they reappeared. At home he had two buckets prepared for him, and put one hand in each. In a very short time the water got hot and had to be changed. Although the pain was severe all night, the water gave some relief. Every time he took his hands out of the water, he told me, he saw a sort of oil flowing over his fingers, and the bluish flame would reappear immediately, but he could only see it clearly when he examined his hands under the table to screen them from the candlelight. M.Varette, a young student of 15 who slept in the same room, saw the flame several times during the course of the night, and his words had a ring of truth to them. Towards dawn, M.Dessimont could see nothing more than a few sparks which he wrongly believed he could put out by rubbing his hands together.

The pain was severe for part of the day, but it was a different sort of pain. It was less biting, less searing than at first. His hands were covered all over, especially the fingers, with enormous blisters

full of a reddish pus.

In several places the epidermis had completely gone, and the corium looked greyish and eaten away. The radial artery was beating strongly, and an inflammation of the sympathetic nervous system of the stomach was just starting. Slits were made in the blisters, a cerat and poultice were used, and a strict diet with lemonade was prescribed. Dessimont wanted to join his family in Chomelix, a small village 14 miles from Le Puy. Before he went, I advised him to have his arm bled in case of inflammation, and to ask the surgeon to keep an exact account of everything he did. I renewed my questioning, asking my questions in a thousand different ways, but his answers were the same as before. When he left me, he was wearing the same clothes as on the day of the accident, and they had not been burnt in any way.

As I wanted more information, and not to be taken in by false appearances, I went to the house where the accident happened. I questioned all the witnesses, and their answers were so frank that I had to accept that M.Dessimont had shown one of these reason–defying combustion phenomena. Twenty–two days after the accident I had the opportunity to pass through Chomelix; I went to see M.Dessimont, and found him in a fair condition. Bleeding had not been necessary, and the inflammation was moderate; a healthy suppuration had taken place, and several fingers were sound. The right medius and wrist were the least healthy; a quite deep and puss–filled ulcer could be seen, but he was not feverish, and his appetite was good. At the very beginning of June, M.Dessimont came back to Le Puy in perfect health. Fairly wide scars could be seen on his fingers and wrists; one of them affected the articulation of the little finger of the left hand. Several nails had gone or were ready to drop off; one of them had been burnt to the quick and will probably not grow back.

What a lot of questions this raises! If the flame was only seen immediately after Dessimont's brother's coat had been on fire, we can reasonably assume that it was caused by sulphur burning and sticking to the hands. It resisted, however, prolonged immersion in cold water, lasted all night, and relit itself a few moments after being bathed in the fountain. It was bright enough to astonish the witnesses and to make Mdme Ginhoux say that his hands were burning like candles. That explanation will not do!

When M.Dessimont arrived at my house, all I could see was a sort of steam or smoke; I must point out, however, that I had a candle in my hand, as did my servant, and that would have dimmed the flames. It was seen more brightly in Dessimont's house, probably because it was burning brighter, and the light of the candle in the flat was dimmer due to the wick being damaged by the sulphur. What caused the combustion? Hydrogen? What could have produced it? We cannot put it down to the subject's bad habits as he is a teetotaller; nor to his age, as he is only twenty–four, nor to a state of general asthenia, as he is rarely ill, and was in perfect health when the accident took place.

Why should the gas have accumulated only in the hands where the skin is thickest? If there were gas, why was there no swelling? Why didn't it explode when it caught fire? Can we say it was electricity? Of course not; even with all the wonders it can cause, I do not think it caused this.

SECOND OBSERVATION

Let us compare the above case with the one observed by Dr Moulinié in a letter to Jules Cloquet published in the *Nouveau Journal de Médicine*, December 1822, vol.15, and you will see that there are quite a few similarities.

"On 15th September last year, Renateau, a 40–year–old blacksmith from Loignan, a village eight miles from Bordeaux, was going home in the company of a girl, carrying his jacket on a stick over his shoulder as it was very hot; it was then four o'clock in the afternoon. He was a mere hundred feet from home and on a deserted path away from other houses when he suddenly felt a severe pain in the index finger of his right hand, which started to tingle and give off fire and smoke. He drew his thumb and middle finger together to put out the flame, but the thumb and the tip of the middle finger caught fire. Then he tried to put the flames out by pressing his fingers into the cloth of his trousers, but the cloth got burnt in two places. He then put his hand into his right trouser pocket, but the pocket went up in flames. He very quickly took the garment off, and put his burning fingers into the palm of his left hand; the fire spread. Renateau ran home and asked his wife for cold water urgently. She thought he was joking, but brought a bucket and he plunged his hands into it; he took them out shortly afterwards and the fingers continued burning. He wanted some slush from the grindstone, knowing from past experience that this was the best treatment for burns, but the fire continued. A pious woman there said to him, 'Faith can save you, believe me! Put your hands into holy water.' She went to get some in a bucket, and when he dipped his hands in it, the burning stopped. The person in charge was informed of this extraordinary fact, and drew up a written statement which was sent to the Prefect and to the Mayor of Bordeaux, and was relayed to me at St André's hospital.

Having reasonable doubt as to the reality of spontaneous combustion, and having grave reservations about all things smacking of the miraculous, I was curious to go to Loignan to have some light thrown on this truly unusual case. I saw Renateau, a well–built, sober man, not a heavy drinker, and conferred with several people who had witnessed the event. I scrupulously examined the burns, which consisted of a sort of tumefaction of the epidermis on the right forefinger and thumb, a large blister around the third phalanx of the middle finger on the same side, and blisters inside the

left medius and forefinger two thirds of an inch in diameter. Pus was forming under the raised skin. I examined the trousers and saw the imprint of two fingers; the trouser pocket which was made of cotton was holed and singed by the fire. All the people who gave me information were sincere and frank. I suspected no subterfuge, no motive to raise anyone's interest. I have remained convinced of the reality of the combustion, but as everyone attributed the fire's going out to the holy water, I made some enquiries about it. Renateau said he felt some relief when he plunged his hands into the bucket of water; he thought that the fire would have gone out without the holy water. Finally he told me that the fire had gone out in the right hand before the holy water had arrived, which is proof that the fire would have stopped in the other hand. The holy water would have acted as a secondary measure to hurry the fire's extinction."

In this account, as in the preceeding one, the combustion only reached the hands, weakened, and went out with the cold baths, and the lesions were superficial even though the fire lasted quite a long time. In Renateau's case, the combustion was spontaneous; in Dessimont's, it was due to contact with a burning object. With Renateau, the clothes that were touched were burnt; with Dessimont, on the other hand, the combustion was confined to living flesh and did not spread to the clothing. In Renateau's case the fire spread from one hand to the other; in Dessimont's it developed on both at once. There are quite a few differences in the two studies, but they are of little importance. One can't help feeling that the two subjects had some predisposition to burning, centred on the hands, triggered by an unknown force in Renateau's case and by a burning object in Dessimont's. That disposition, however, defies all rational explanation, as does the combustion itself. M.Moulinié's suppositions are inadmissable, and Lair and Marc's theories do not stand up to the facts given here.

It is true that these partial combustions differ from those which the aforementioned doctors tried to explain; in these cases the damage was limited, and in other cases the whole body was consumed, leading to death. Is it not obvious that the differences are only of degree, and that the phenomenon is, in both cases, the same? I think that in spite of the work of the learned doctors I have quoted, the origin, nature and cause of complete or partial combustion remain shrouded in deep mists, and the truth has still not been unveiled. Shall we now dare to try and solve such an obscure problem? Shall we enter into an arena where so many nimble athletes have toiled to no avail? No, gentlemen, we are not afraid to admit our ignorance. We cannot yet put forward a rational and satisfying theory. Rather than give rein to our imaginations and form ideas which could contradict our observations, we think it preferable to stay silent. We must be able to admit that nature still has thousands of secrets, and that medicine, although progressing by leaps and bounds, has not yet reached the degree of perfection it one day will achieve. As each doctor must, however, contribute as much he can to his dicipline, he must gather facts, compare them with those already published on the same subject to draw useful conclusions, and publish them so that they can serve as the building blocks of a lasting structure should they fall into the hands of a clever architect.

This, then, is the reason that has urged me to entertain you with the facts I have been able to gather. If I have criticised the opinions of doctors whose worth I fully realise, it is because, like Peyrilhe, I am convinced that you always gain by undoing a mistake, and that you do not look for truth if you think you already hold it in your hands.

FOOTNOTES

■ 1 – Notice by Devillars in the *Journal de médicine* (1786, vol.69.) ■ 2 – *Recueil périodique de la Société de médicine de Paris* (vol.7, p392) and Vigué: *Médecine légale*, p148.

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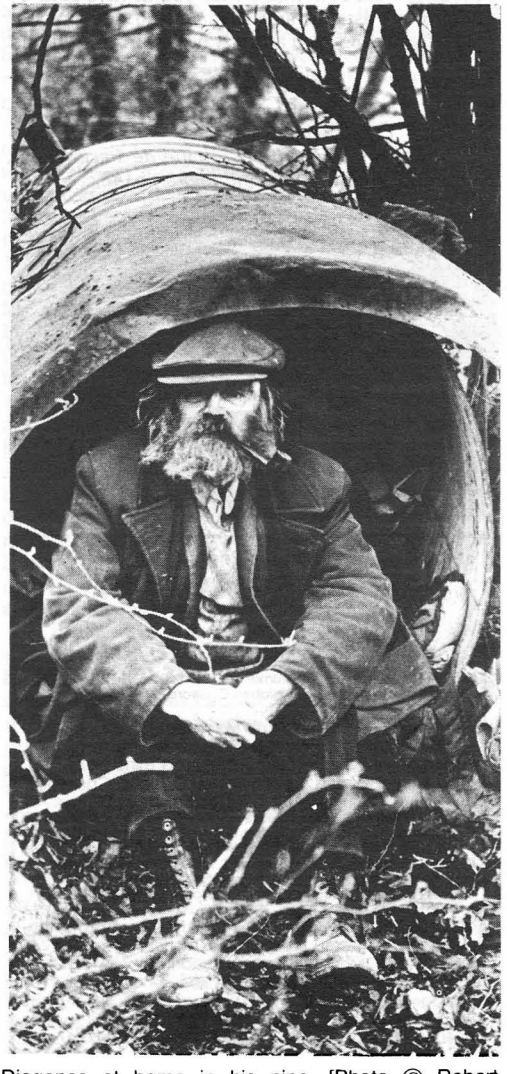
THE UNBURIED DEAD

BY PAUL SIEVEKING

In recent issues, I have examined the postponement of death and the recovery from near–death; now here come some tales of burial refused, and in some cases, death denied. The theme of the first is artistic freedom, and that of the last is the perennial yearning for immortality, while the rest come under the general heading of pathological behaviour. Some are quite gruesome. Brace yourselves.



Diogenes at home in his pipe. [Photo © Robert Lenkiewicz.]

DIOGENES

In December 1984, there was widespread press interest in the tussle between the artist Robert Lenkiewicz, 41, and Plymouth City Council over the embalmed body of a tramp called Edwin McKenzie, who had died seven weeks before at the age of 72.

The relationship between McKenzie and Lenkiewicz began some 20 years earlier after the latter had befriended as many as 700 vagrants to whom he gave a home in nine warehouses. He was told about McKenzie, a non–alcoholic vagrant from Chelson Meadow, a Plymouth rubbish tip, where his home was a corrugated pipe in the cleft of a tree on a hill. "I would go out and do watercolour studies of him. He started coming to my studio and within weeks he was a permanent assistant and liked to refer to himself as my secretary. I nicknamed him Diogenes after the Greek philosopher who lived in a barrel." He claimed to eat grass [see the tale of Roger Crab on page **45**], and earned his living from scavenging from the tip. He moved into one of the warehouses, but because of conflict with other vagrants (he was territorial, dirty and belligerent), Lenkiewicz found him a flat with the help of the local authority.

The two became good friends, and in 1978 they agreed in writing that when McKenzie died, Lenkiewicz should have his body embalmed, coated in transparent resin and displayed naked in his library as a *memento mori*, a reminder of life's great mysteries. (Readers might recall the 'Auto–Icon' of Jeremy Bentham, preserved in a glass case in University College, London, since his death in 1832. This, in fact, is not the great utilitarian's body but a dummy that may possibly contain his bones. His mummified head, which used to sit on the ground between his feet, was stolen during rag week in 1983.)

McKenzie died in November 1984, the artist obtained his body from a local hospital and took it to an embalmer at Budleigh Salterton for a process known as prosectioning. This is an expensive operation involving the impregnation of the body with phenols and other preservatives and is usually practised on medical specimens. Under the direc-

tion of one of Europe's top embalmers, a novel method was employed, so that the body didn't have to be refrigerated between stages. More than 15 times more chemicals were used than in normal prosectioning. Lenkiewicz planned to have a special cabinet made with drawers at the base for tapes and photographs, including those of over 400 paintings which he had done of his friend. "The cabinet would contain the body unclothed and not dissimilar to many that can be seen in provincial and national museums in England." Lenkiewicz tells me that there are about 15,000 bodies on display round the world, of which three are in Plymouth and about 6,000 in Palermo, where for 400 years or more the dead have been dressed in their finest and displayed in the catacombs below the church of St Francis. One of the best preserved is that of two–year–old Rosalia Lombardo who died in 1920. The week following our conversation, I received a clipping about little Rosalia from a reader [see photo].

The national press reports (*Times, D.Telegraph, Guardian* 13 Dec 1984) mentioned that Lenkiewicz wished to embalm Diogenes "like a large paperweight"; this misunderstanding arose because his initial idea was to place the body in a block of perspex, until he discovered that the block would weigh seven tons! The health authorities conceded that there was no health risk as the body had been professionally embalmed, but disputed the enterpretation of "suitable arrangements" for the disposal of bodies under section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act, 1984. Said Michael Fox, Plymouth's environmental health officer: "Mr Lenkiewicz assures us that displaying corpses in people's homes is a custom around the world, in places like Mexico or Italy. But this is not Mexico or Italy. This is Plymouth." There was no case law to help, the artist had apparently not broken any law, and so the body remains in the artist's possession, at an undisclosed location. At one point it was taken to a 'learned institution' in London.

For a while, newspapers fell over each other to get a photograph of the embalmed Diogenes. Lenkiewicz was offered sums varying from £7,000 to £30,000, but he had promised Diogenes that no photographs would be published. Someone did, however, take a photo without permission, which later appeared in an Australian publication. "Diogenes would have smiled to see how much more important he is dead than he ever was alive", Lenkiewicz remarked.

John Owen from the *Western Morning News* was allowed to see the body in May 1985, after a disorienting midnight ride in a curtained car. "The man in the coffin was tiny," he reported. "Gone were all signs of the luxurient beard he sported. The flesh was rosiate, and the face peaceful." (Main source: *Western Morning News* 13 May 1985, and conversation with Robert Lenkiewicz. See also the *Times* leader of 15 Dec 1984 and the piece by Roger Scruton, *Times* 18 Dec 1984.)

Rosalia Lombardo, aged 2, preserved since 1920 under the church of St Francis in Palermo. [*The People* 31 Jan 1988.]

DEAD RELATIONS AT HOME

● **MRS NIXON**

Mr H.Hughes, auctioneer, of Crewe, entered a house in Nantwich under an order in bankruptcy sometime in 1926. The door had to be forced with iron bars. He was met by three sisters with hands uplifted. One exclaimed: "We are in God's hands. This is God's house. There is fire and brimstone in every room. Mother must not be touched; she is in God's hands." Close to a couch in the kitchen was the mother's skeleton, wrapped in a sheet. Nearby was a table spread with fruit, nuts, bread, butter, and a bowl of tea. One daughter said they had not been to bed for five years and had lived in the kitchen with the body. Clipping from unnamed 1926 paper from the scrapbooks of George Ives.

● **ELIZA COX**

died of heart failure on 31 October 1972, after months of ill–health, in the home of her younger son Edward in Main Street, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. He laid out the body and went to

tell his elder brother Bill, a former police sergeant, who had power of attorney, and was responsible for funeral arrangements. Edward, very distraught, said he was going away until after the funeral, but in fact went to Brighton where he remained for the next 13 years. Bill was afraid he would be accused of his mother's death, and walled her up in a bedroom of his brother's house, clad in a nightdress under a pile of old blankets. At the inquest in 1985, the prosecutor said that Cox, then 63, had kept his mother's death a secret so that the rest of the family could not get hold of her estate, worth £400,000. In May 1974 he rented the house out. Here she remained for the next seven years, while he continued to draw her pension, even though he had £352,000 in shares and £40,000 in a building society. He dressed in rags, and lived on tea, bread and tins of peas.

In 1979, when his tenants and neighbours complained about the smell, he put the body in a home–made coffin packed with sawdust and roofing felt, lugged it through the streets on an old tradesman's bike, and stored it in his shed in Station Road. Police began to make enquiries, and he buried it beneath the garden wall in October 1984. When they finally found the body, it was in a mummified state, or 'muffified state', according to the *Cambridge Evening News* of 18 Dec 1985. The *D.Telegraph* of the same day said she was finally laid to rest to the authority's satisfaction on 22 March 1985. The downstairs rooms of Bill's house were piled floor to ceiling with old newspapers, but there were also priceless antique furniture, unworn suits and other clothes. *D.Mirror, Scotsman* 20 Dec 1985.

● **ASSUNTA PIERGIROLAMI**

died in Acilia near Rome in 1977 at the age of 50. Neighbours were told that she was bedridden and too ill to see anyone. Her husband, Nello Maggi, a carpenter of 61, died in February 1987, after wasting away as a result of a disease for which he refused to seek medical help. The neighbours called the police, who took in his sister Lina, 65, for questioning. She began raving, uttering predictions in the name of the prophet Elias and repeating: "It was the will of God." The other resident, Lola Fagioli, 66, refused to talk.

The police entered the house and broke down the bedroom door. Nello Maggi lay naked under a sheet on a huge bed which he had built. Beside him was the mummified body of his wife. A seven– foot crucifix dominated the room. Banners bearing the Star of David, one inscribed "The Nazarene lives", another, "Father, Christ and Holy Spirit" hung around the death–bed. "We did not bury them because God did not wish it. We kept them in a purified, family environment", explained the two women. They performed rites in the presence of the dead. A Polaroid photo was found showing Mr Maggi and his sister standing as if in prayer next to the corpse of Assunta.

The group were devotees of a mystical holy man called Basilio Roncacci, who died almost 40 years ago. His devotees, who believe that the dead should go unburied and illness untreated, first held their gatherings in his home, then dispersed in small congregations of 10 or so around Acilia. Police were searching for other cult members who might be harbouring corpses. *Independent* 12 June 1987.

● **CARL STEVENS**

40, a bookkeeper with J.P.Benbow, a heating and cooling company in Galesburg, IL, and a severe diabetic, was last seen alive in May 1979. Police investigated, but his brother Roger, a lawyer, told them and all his friends and relations to stay away because he was ill, and if anyone persisted he would file a harassment suit. Roger belonged to an eccentric cult called the "Holistic Society" led by Dr Harold Scott, a dentist in the Cayman Islands, which believed in natural healing through dentistry, vitamins and "mind–altering herbs". It was subsequently discovered that Roger had persuaded his brother to reduce his insulin injections in favour of the cult's products. In the weeks before his death, he had cut his insulin intake in half and was taking up to 20 vitamin pills a day. He died on 12 May in his wife's arms after vomiting a "black substance". Roger Stevens died at the age of 43 on 20 March 1985. His death was attributed to gastro–intestinal hemorrhage and hepatic cirrhosis, but his nurse thought it was his diet that had done for him. He weighed only 89 pounds.

The investigation into the death of Carl Stevens was reopened after a nephew, Curt Poutsch of Cudahy, WI, was invited to Knoxville, IL, by Carl's widow Carole for Thanksgiving in 1987, and wasn't allowed upstairs. He told authorities he had to be checked to see whether he had "a black soul before he was allowed to enter communications with Carl Stevens through a channeling–like method prior to his admittance to the house."He was not allowed into the bedroom where he began to suspect his uncle's body lay.

Authorities finally entered the house on 29 January 1988, and found Stevens lying in bed, dressed in light blue denim trousers over underpants and white socks. His front teeth were intact, but several others had fallen out and had been kept in storage. The skin was drawn tightly over the bones, but the leathery flesh on the upper body had been kept moist with lotion which his widow, Carole 42, a registered nurse, applied every day. She and her two children, Cindy, 17, and Craig, 14, apparently believed that he was only ill. For over eight years, they had kept him either on a beach chair in the cool basement or in bed upstairs, and changed his clothes and bedding every day. They had also attempted to communicate daily with the mummy in channelling sessions. After Roger Stevens died, they had also tried to communicate with him.

Two devoted sons: Bill Cox (left) bricked up his mother in a bedroom; and Saul Kent (right) cut off his mother's head and froze it.

Dr Richard Kunce, 56, who had known the family since 1979, had given up his dental practice in Aurora, IL, and had moved in with the family as their "spiritual leader" in September 1986. The health cult included at least three other dentists from the suburbs of Chicago. Police were investigating. The mummified body was finally buried in the Wataga cemetary in early February 1988. The misdemeanor of failing to notify a coroner of a death carries a maximum penalty of a year in jail and $1,000 fine. Stevens and Kunce were also charged with forging a power of attorney in 1984. *St Louis Post-Dispatch* 2 Feb + 14 Feb; *Chicago Tribune* 2 Feb 1988.

● **RODRIGO GOMEZ**
died of a heart attack in Bogota, Colombia, in May 1979. His widow, Gloria Gomez, 53, propped him up in their bedroom and surrounded him with candles and photographs. Eight years later, police discovered the bizarre shrine when they entered the wrong house on a routine burglary call. They found Mrs Gomez and a friend kneeling before the corpse, which was covered in gold cloth and wearing a halo of thin silver wire. A friend of the family told reporters: "Rodrigo was a devout and wonderful man in life and we felt like his body was a channel for God's healing grace after he died. A small group of us often prayed at his shrine and many wonderful things happened for us. If we needed money we got it. When we were sick we were miraculously healed." The only source for this story (so far) is the *Weekly World News* (10 Nov 1987). The coicidence of dates with the case of Carl Stevens (above) would make us suspicious...except that it appeared two months before the discovery of Stevens' body.

● **IVY WHITING**
Miss Hazel Whiting, 48, lived alone with her mother Ivy, 90, at their home in Bridge Street, Framlingham, Suffolk, for over 30 years, until she died on 15 December 1983. She could not accept her mother's death, and preserved her body for over a year, sprinkling it daily with talcum powder and using three cans of air freshener a week. She would sit in the bedroom talking to her, continued to feed her liquids, including brandy on her wedding anniversary. She would wipe her face and smooth her hair with a comb. No–one was allowed in the house apart from meter readers, and the curtains were always kept drawn. Police entered on 20 December 1984, and found Ivy's body, which had begun to mummify. *D.Express* 29 Dec 1984; *D.Telegraph* 8 Jan 1985.

● **MONIQUE MARTINOT**
died in a car crash in March 1984, and her gynaecologist husband Dr Jean–Louis (or Raymond) Martinot, 62, put her in a deep freeze at 130 degrees below zero in his castle in Nueil–sur–Layon in France, hoping that her life could be restored at a later date. He kept it a secret until about August, when the freezer conked out and he had to call in a repairman. The authorities began proceedings to have her buried, and in September 1987 the police were planning to force her burial. *Weekly World News* 28 Aug 1984; *D.Mail* 25 Sept 1987.

● **ANN MORGAN**
lived for 40 years with her son, John Parks, in Houston, Texas, after he had returned from service as a Marine in the South Pacific. In 1970, she moved into an apartment at 1107 Banks Street near Rice University to help her brother take care of their elderly mother. After their mother went into a nursing home, the brother, Murt Burgholtz, committed suicide in the living room. John Parks then moved in with his mother, and shut her off from the outside world. Nobody saw her after 1984.

On 23 October 1986, Lora Friedman, an official with the Texas Department of Human Services (!),

called to check out a report of possible abuse, and with great difficulty persuaded Parks to let her in. In a darkened bedroom she peered through a blanket hanging on a clothesline and saw something propped up in an armchair completely draped in blankets. Parks forced her to leave. Apart from a plumber who had mended a sink about 18 months earlier, she was the first outsider to enter the apartment in about 10 years. At 4.15pm on 30 October she returned with several policemen and a court order, and found the mummified body of Ann Morgan, 89, propped up in a rocking chair wearing a nightgown and rubber boots, covered with a blanket, and surrounded with air–fresheners. Parks, 65, was found lying dead nearby on a bed, with a gunshot wound in his right temple and a .38 calibre pistol in his hand. A medical examination showed that Morgan had been dead for at least a year, possibly two.

Less than a week before his death, Parks had written to his brother Carl, saying their mother was in good health. Local shopkeepers recalled him coming in for makeup and other cosmetics for her. Police found the house spotless, with important dates noted on a wall calendar. One officer said: "He had marked dates where he had taken the dead woman out on little trips. He planned special dinners for them – complete with candles." One typical entry was for 22 September. It said simply: :"Picnic – Mama." He even took her to drive–in movies, according to the *Weekly World News*. No–one could help recalling – and no journalist failed to mention – Hitchcock's film *Psycho*, in which Norman Bates kept his dead mother in a rocking chair. Houston *Chronicle* 30 + 31 Oct; Columbus (OH) *Dispatch*, Lincoln (NB) *Journal* 31 Oct; *D.Telegraph, D.Mirror* 4 Nov; *Weekly World News* 9 Dec 1986.

● **ALBERT JEFFREY**
was 69 when he died in 1984, in the east end of London. On 2 September 1987, a council official broke down the door after water began seeping through the ceiling of the flat below, and discovered the rotting corpse of Mr Jeffrey sitting in an armchair, covered with a blanket. As he went to touch it, the head fell off. His widow, Betty, 70, who was out at the pub at the time of the discovery, was taken into care. *Independent, D.Telegraph, Sun* 3 Sept 1987. The *Daily Mirror* (29 Oct 1987) calls him Frederick. The address is variously given as Dalston, Stoke Newington and Hackney.

● **S.R.DUTTA**
a forestry official, went into a "spiritual coma", according to his wife Kamlesh, on 17 June 1985, in Chandigarh, 130 miles north of New Delhi. Believing that her guru, Amir Chand Kaushal, was keeping him alive, she slept next to him, sponged him twice a day and frequently trimmed his hair and cut his nails, which she said continued to grow. 22 months later, despite her claims that the colour of her husband's skin had improved, officials took him to a mortuary on 7 May 1987. [AP] *Independent* 6 May; *Guardian, Sandwell Express & Star* 8 May 1987.

● **ROBERT DRAPEY**
37, lived with his aunt Mary Veronia, 57, on Brooklyn Avenue, Flatbush, and was reported missing sometime in 1986. On 30 January 1988, the aunt's brother Anthony obtained a court order to enter the house and found the skeleton of Robert Drapey in bed wearing trousers and shirt and wrapped in a blanket. It appeared that his skull had been crushed. Mary Veronia was taken to hospital for observation. *NY Daily News* 1 Feb 1988.

● **WILLIAM BOND**
When police gained entry to William and Edith Bond's ground floor flat in Southwark, London, on 2 June 1986, they found the "very badly decomposed" body of William Bond, 74, tucked up in bed. Edith Bond told one of them: "I won't miss him. As far as I'm concerned the dustmen can take him away." He had been dead for six weeks and the cause of death was unascertainable. *D.Telegraph* 31 July 1986.

● **BERNARD KELLY**
Frances Dawson Hamilton, 70, was found dead in bed in her home in Philadelphia, next to the skeleton of Bernard Kelly, who would have been 84, and who had been dead for more than two years. He was clothed in long johns and socks and draped with palm fronds and rosary beads. *Wolverhampton Express & Star* 30 Jan 1987.

● **JAMES LEON STARRETT**
47, died of natural causes sometime in November 1986, in South Lake Tahoe, California. Over the next three months, his grieving widow Linda, 42, slept with his leathery corpse and starved herself to death. Houston (TX) *Chronicle* 16 Feb 1987.

● **HAYDN THOMAS**
an ex–miner of 65, died in the cold spell in January 1987 in the bachelor flat of his brother William, 71, in Rhondda, South Wales. William didn't tell anybody because he couldn't afford a funeral. The average cost of a funeral is £400, while the death grant is only £30. Six months later, Haydn's body was found in bed by a welfare officer. *People* 28 June; *Today, Sun, Scotsman* 2 July 1987.

● **AGNES FORCHEE AND CHARLOTTE ARLINGTON**
Carl Forchee, 77, a retired Sunday school teacher, was found dead in his home in Indianapolis on 20 November 1987, probably from a stroke or heart attack in the previous two days. In different cobweb–filled bedrooms, covered with blankets, were found the mummified bodies of his sister, Agnes Forchee, who had not been seen for two years, and his aunt, Charlotte Arlington, who had

not been seen for ten. Had they lived, the sister would have been 80 and the aunt 104. On the aunt's bed were clothes laid out as if she were going to get dressed. It appeared that Forchee withstood the stench of the house by taking menthol lozenges, of which 12 to 15 unopened bags were found. The garage contained a 1961 Studebaker Lark which had clocked up 20,000 miles. On the study desk was an unopened Christmas card from 1978. A neighbour had done his banking and shopping, and no–one had been let into the house for many years. Forchee had continued to cash the welfare checks of the two women. Beaumont (TX) *Enterprise* 22 Nov; *D.Mirror, Independent* 24 Nov 1987.

● **MARY MARLEY**
70, failed to answer the door of her council maisonette in Gray's, Essex, and police were called. She was found dead from a heart attack downstairs, and the shrivelled body of her lover, aged about 50, who had been dead for about a year, was found lovingly tucked up in bed upstairs. *D.Mirror,Star* 17 Feb 1988.

● **CHRISTINE HICKMAN,**
43, was found tucked up in bed in Akron, Ohio, about two months after her death, apparently from natural causes. Her mother Lilly, 60, seemed to be "mentally slow", according to Akron Police Captain Jerry Froys. "She was talking about demons, snakes and things, so we took her to a mental care hospital", he said. *Weekly World News* 1 Mar 1988.

● **ELKE BEUTEL**
An Austrian taxidermist, Tom Schauberg, 41, married "sexy German secretary" Elke Beutel, 23. Five weeks later, he found her in bed with an 18–year–old delivery boy. Shooting them both in the heart, he stuffed them and set them in a tableau vivant in his attic, according to Laurel Bowie in the *Weekly World News* (1 Mar 1988), who gets the FT booby prize for omitting date and place. There again, perhaps he made the whole thing up. It was six months before "lawmen stumbled onto the horrifying spectacle". The bodies were dressed in Shakespearean costumes obtained from a theatrical supply house. The wife was on a little balcony, and the boy below her with outstretched arms. Next to them, a neon orange sign read: "Elke's impossible dream. She plays a starring role in Romeo and Juliet." Schauberg was taken away for observation.

TIME, CARLOS, PLEASE

The following wonderful tale supposedly comes from a report in the Lisbon newspaper *Diario de Lisboa*, retold in the *Weekly World News* (10 Nov 1987). A sailor, apparently in his 40s, strolled into the Ruptured Harpooner's Bar (!) somewhere on the Portuguese coast at sundown one day in 1981, and polished off a bottle of tequila. "He sat there with his head on the bar for hours", said bartender Felipe Mesa. "We thought he was sleeping. He was about 6–foot–3 and 230 pounds, so we didn't mess with him." At closing time Mesa and bar owner Jose Varela discovered that the sailor was dead. No–one wanted to take responsibility for burying him. "This is a tough neighbourhood", said Varela. "People come here to escape the law, so we didn't want to call them in."

Six years later, Carlos was still sitting at the bar. The body didn't stink as it slowly mummified. "We made sure there was a shot of tequila in front of him at all times", said Mesa. "We've offered a reward all these years to anyone who could identify him...People poured out their problems to him because he was a very good listener." The story came out after Enrique Martinez, an undercover policeman, walked in and sat down next to the dead sailor. He asked who he was. "We call him Carlos", said Mesa. "He died where he sits. We dress him up as Santa Claus at Christmas and toast him at birthdays. He's our star attraction."

MUMMIFIED CHILDREN

● Michael White,16, found the mummified body of an infant in the family attic in Lawrence, MA, and told police, who arrested his mother Shirley, 51, for murder on 31 January 1979. The body was wrapped in a baby blanket in newspapers dated 27 May 1968. It was inside a leather suitcase inside a cardboard box wrapped in plastic, which was itself stuffed inside a second box and wrapped in newspaper. Portland (ME) *Press* 2 Feb 1979.

● Miss Netta Verga, 77, died in Balham. London, on 2 October 1985. Her two sisters looked through her belongings and discovered the mummified body of a baby in a brown paper parcel in a locked cupboard. A pathologist said the baby was either stillborn, or survived only two or three days, and had been dead between 40 and 70 years. He could not tell the cause of death. *D.Telegraph* 6 Nov 1985.

● Janitors who broke into an abandoned Philadelphia apartment on 21 May 1987 found the mummified body of Sylvia Regina Smith, aged 3, dressed in a blue nightgown and kneeling against a bed as if in prayer. The mother, Clarise Smith, 22, was charged with failure to report the death, with additional charges to follow. The little girl had last been seen around Christmas and may have starved to death. *NY Daily News* 22 May 1987.

KEEPING A COOL HEAD

Dora Kent, 83, a New York dressmaker and draper suffering from severe arthritis and on the verge of death from a degenerative brain disease, was moved out of a convalescent home on 9 December 1987 by her son Saul, 48. She was taken to a cryogenics outfit called the Alcor Life Extension Foundation, located in a warehouse on the outskirts of Riverside, 55 miles east of Los Angeles,

California. Her feeding tube was removed and she was denied food and medication for six days, and then decapitated. Her head was preserved in liquid nitrogen at minus 200 degrees, in the hope that, with the advance of technology, it could be reattached to a body or be used in a brain transplant.

An orthodox brain specialist was quoted as saying that cryogenics was more "in the realm of Hollywood than medical science." The operation cost Saul Kent, a long–time believer in cryogenics, $30,000. The fee for preserving a whole body is $100,000. His father had died when he was 10 months old, and he had lived with his mother most of his life. He claimed that his mother had wanted to be cryonically preserved, but she had not given Alcor written authorisation.

The suspicions of the coroner's office were first aroused by Dora Kent's death certificate, which said she died of pneumonia, unattended, at a "residence", but the address listed was that of the Alcor Foundation. It had been signed by an Alcor member who was a postgraduate research pathologist at the UCLA School of Medicine, a day after the decapitation. As no outside authority was present to certify brain death, it was thought possible that she was still alive when her head was cut off; in which case, murder charges might be preferred. Mike Darwin, Alcor president, insisted she was "clinically and legally dead when we began the 'neuropreservation' operation."

An examination of the headless body indicated pneumonia and arteriosclerotic heart disease; but the head was required to complete the autopsy. Alcor refused to produce the head, because of fears that this would damage the skull and brain and interfere with cryonic suspension. Coroner's investigators raided the lab on 7 January 1988, finding guns and explosives, along with six (or seven) heads and one complete body frozen and stored without permits, as well as a cat and two dogs. The weaponry belonged to a living Alcor member who stored them there as it was earthquake–proof. The authorities also claimed to have found evidence that body fluids from an AIDS victim had been dumped in the sewer system, which was denied. The cannister containing Dora Kent's head had already been removed by her son. The lab was again raided on 12 January to remove equipment suspected of being stolen from the UCLA Medical Center.

Alcor was founded in 1972 and is the second largest cryonics group in the US, with about 250 members, 98 of whom want to be frozen. An estimated 14 heads or complete bodies are known to be frozen in the US: besides the bodies and heads at Alcor, two bodies are kept by the Cryonics Institute in Oak Park, MI, and three heads and two bodies at TransTime Inc. in Oakland, CA., which claims to be the largest cryonics group, with 102 members seeking preservation. Advances in cryobiology, a recognised branch of medical research that studies the effects of very low temperatures on living tissue, have allowed the freezing of blood, corneas, bone marrow, sperm and even embryos for use at a later date; but so far this has not worked with the pancreas, kidneys or heart. The feasability of reanimation remains unproven. Omaha *World Herald*, Houston *Chronicle* 25 Dec 1987; Lincoln (NE) *Journal*, Houston *Chronicle* 9 Jan; Cleveland (OH) *Plain Dealer*, West Virginia *Advocate* 14 Jan; *Newsweek* 18 Jan; *New Haven Register* 25 Jan 1988.

ENVOI

Pepsi Cola had to abandon their slogan *Come alive with Pepsi* for their sales campaign in China as it translates as "Pepsi Brings Your Ancestors Back From The Grave". *Int.Herald Tribune* 17 April 1981. This news item was recycled recently in the context of Thailand (*The News*, Portsmouth 24 Feb 1987.) Presumably, Pepsi would not make the same mistake twice; but a good story is worth repeating – of such stuff myths are made.

FAIRIES, DEVILS, MIBs & UFOs

Our two main articles this issue are loosely related around the subject of encounters with bizarre UFO-associated entities. In fact the association with UFOs is a modern gloss, as any scholar from the Renaissance on would have no difficulty in placing accounts such as these into the context of popular or vulgar belief. Some writers on the subject of UFOs have already explored (albeit superficially) the folklore origins of UFO encounter imagery. Significantly, the continuum of experience between encounters with modern 'aliens' and with the elementals of old is proving fertile ground for research. The robotic 'fairies' who hijacked Mrs Hingley [see MINCE PIE MARTIANS], and those modern stand-ins for the Devil, the MIBs [see MEN IN BLACK EXPERIENCES], testify to the contemporary reality of that continuity.

Our cover illustrations come from an Italian work of 1650, depicting the flying ships of the *tempestarii*, trickster-like magician-bandits who figure largely in the popular imagination of the Middle Ages, as exemplified by the French tales of Magonia, their cloud-land refuge. They are clearly associated with the Devil and a man-in-black, while their ship itself hints at its more ancient flying dragon form.

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'MEN IN BLACK' EXPERIENCES

ANALOGUES OF THE TRADITIONAL DEVIL ENCOUNTER

PETER M. ROJCEWICZ

Within the post-World War II context of belief in extraterrestrial visitations of the Earth, older folklore traditions have found a renewed vitality. The 'Men in Black' enigma provides the folklorist with a rich body of narratives and beliefs in which to examine the relationship between the ancient tradition of the Devil and a contemporary UFO-related experience.

Most existing folklore studies of UFO belief materials have failed to appreciate fully the complex interrelateuness of UFOs with numerous belief traditions. This fact is no more clearly demonstrated, perhaps, than with belief in the 'Men in Black' [MIB]. The MIB phenomenon constitutes a rather esoteric part of the UFO experience and tradition. The cryptic nature of the MIB indicates something of the complexity of the UFO question, as it involves a continuum of related but discrete phenomena and beliefs **[Rojcewicz 1986]**. With a better understanding of the UFO experience in general, the student of belief materials is more likely to perceive the numerous continuities between UFO-related phenomena and various folk traditions. The general hypothesis of the UFO provides a useful means of transferring these folk traditions into a more contemporary context. Nor is it necessary to negate either their traditional components or their important phenomenological differences in order to prove that UFOs exist **[Rojcewicz 1984]**.

LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

From the outset we must distinguish between two levels of involvement, that is, the tradition and the actual experience. The MIB tradition consists of those individuals who know of the MIB through oral accounts, publications, and recently a movie, but who themselves have never actually encountered such a figure, and thus provide the "data" we are to use to gauge the nature and distribution of the tradition. An individual qualifies as a "passive tradition bearer" if he knows the tradition but does not actively pass it along. Secondly, the scholar must carefully handle memorate accounts of MIB encounters. First-person accounts of MIB often reveal phenomenological traits different in degree or even in kind from the tradition. Individuals who possess an experiential relationship with MIB may be completely independent of the existing body of lore. Moreover, the scholar faces the problem of gauging the informants' degree of belief. An individual may wholeheartedly believe one's MIB experience but only partially accept or completely disavow its alleged extraterrestrial nature **[Goldstein 1964:17-18; Dégh and Vázsonyi 1976:116-119]**.

TRADITION AND EXPERIENCE

We will face some difficulty in attempting to distinguish accounts of tradition from accounts of actual experience, especially if these accounts have found their way at some point into print. Scholars would do well to keep several factors in mind. First, we need a knowledge of the generic conventions of UFO narratives in general, and accounts of the MIB experience in particular. Aware of the generic tradition out of which the informants' claims arise, we can spot pressure points, as well as values, within the generic frame. In addition, it seems equally important for scholars to be aware of the conventions of form, content, and style of investigative reporting, or what is sometimes called "journalistic fiction," in order to scrape away the personality of the investigator and get to the experience. In cases where it is possible to do so, a psychological profile of the informants would help us determine to what degree the reality of the community of those visited by MIB finds consonance with the informants' accounts. Since we know the framing structure of the popular author and, perhaps, even the witness, we can now gauge the potential for individual elaboration and variation. Precisely by guarding against personal or cultural reflectivity, the phenomenology is allowed to come through.

ORIGINS OF THE 'MEN IN BLACK' TRADITION

One of the oldest "legend proposals" **[Dégh and Vázsonyi 1979:66]** of the age of flying saucers concerns the mysterious 'Men in Black." The story begins with a Bridgeport, Connecticut factory clerk, Albert K. Bender. In 1952 Bender lived with his stepfather on the top floor of

a house that a local newspaper described as a "chamber of horrors." Bender had artificial bats, spiders, rats, and shrunken heads in his apartment. Pictures of vampires, werewolves, and assorted monsters adorned his bedroom. Bender was an avid fan of both science fiction and horror films. He had a strong interest in black magic and the occult. These cold war years after World War II saw the rise of interest not only in flying saucers and their occupants but also in monsters and the fantastic in general.

Bender's involvement with the 'Men in Black' took place in 1953, a time when UFO investigation in America lay primarily in the hands of enthusiastic science fiction fans. Bender sent a letter to a friend who was likewise interested in UFOs, stating that he had learned the origin and ultimate goal of extraterrestrial visitation of the Earth. Soon after Bender mailed this letter, three men dressed in black suits approached him; one of the three men carried Bender's letter. The MIB delivered a message to Bender that troubled him profoundly. He immediately discontinued all his UFO-related activities. Gyroscope technician Dominick Lucchesi and publisher Gray Barker, friends of Bender, believed that the MIB had revealed to him the secret of UFOs and had prevented him from telling the world what he knew. In any event, Bender appeared frightened. Gray Barker wrote a book about the Bender case, entitled *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers* **[1956]**. Several years later Bender published his own account of his MIB experience, which he called *Flying Saucers and the Three Men* **[1962]**. This account of Bender's alleged abduction to the South Pole by grizzly monsterlike UFO occupants from the planet "Kazik' was received dubiously by even Bender's closest friends **[Clark 1980:178]**.

DESCRIPTIVE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE MIB EXPERIENCE

MIB activity flourished with the increased sighting of UFOs during the "flap" of 1966-67, and numerous UFO researchers claimed MIB experiences **[Keel 1976b:86]**. MIB have been reported to arrive unannounced, sometimes alone or in twos, traditionally in threes, at the homes or places of employment of selected UFO witnesses and investigators or their research assistants, usually *before* the witness or researcher has reported the UFO experience to anyone; or in the case of some investigators, before they have even undergone a UFO experience of any kind. People have reported that MIB know more about them than the average stranger could possibly know, and thus MIB can possess an omniscient air **[Hynek and Vallée 1975:138-141]**.

In the mid-1960s, MIB often identified themselves as military intelligence personnel, usually representing the Air Force. On 15 February 1967, a confidential memo from the Pentagon went out to all intelligence command centers informing them to notify immediately the Office of Special Investigations if persons masquerading as military officers were apprehended intimidating UFO witnesses **[Fawcett and Greenwood 1984:237]**. Sometimes referred to as "strong-arm agents," MIB reportedly appeared during this time like gangsters or international terrorists and spies, the same time James Bond 007 was matching wits with his nemesis SMERSH in movie theaters across America **[Steiger 1978:121]**.

The Jews have also been associated with the MIB. Some of the early "contactees" of the 1950s were members of fascist fringe groups, and the Jews were their primary suspects for political and racist reasons. "After Hitler's Final Solution had rendered an open advocacy of anti-Semitism a difficult proposition," Jerry Clark **[1980:286]** has written, "American fascists resurrected a code phrase: 'International Banker.' "Those conversant in the literature of political hanky-panky knew full well that the term "International Banker" referred to the Jews. The belief that the Jews intended to make life miserable for select 'decent white folk' and thus dispatched dark-skinned and -attired intimidators to frustrate the lives of Aryans never became an acceptable position in the UFO investigative community. The majority of investigators felt that MIB participated in a conspiracy of silence, orchestrated not by fascist political groups, but by the United States Air Force. The chief proponent of the conspiracy theory was Donald E. Keyhoe **[1955, 1960]**.

Although some MIB have been reported to act silly more than threateningly and thus suggest the figure of the Trickster, people have reported that MIB have roughed up or otherwise intimidated UFO witnesses, investigators, or their families. Max Radar [pseudonym], an associate professor at the University of Denver, has revealed that during a period of several months during which he underwent an "MIB attack," his children were on different occasions stopped on the sidewalk and warned that their father should stop his UFO lecturing and research. Dr. Radar left the university to hide for a short time. **[1]** Even police officers who have chased UFOs in their squad cars have been gathered into garages and sternly advised by MIB that they did not see what they saw **[Steiger 1977:197-198]**.

It has happened that if a witness has managed to photograph a UFO or its occupant/s, a fact known only to the witness, the MIB have stolen the picture or have demanded possession of the photo or negative. Dr. Herbert Hopkins, the skilled physician who conducted hypnosis sessions with David Stephens after his UFO experience, himself encountered a "Man in Black' on Saturday, 11 September 1976, at 8:00pm. The MIB told Dr. Hopkins that celebrated UFO abductee Barney Hill **[Fuller 1966]** "died because he knew too much" about UFOs and that unless Hopkins destroyed his

UFO-related tapes and correspondence, he would suffer the same fate as Barney Hill **[Schwarz 1983:II, 242-243]**. Dr. Hopkins complied.

Often dressed in black clothing that may appear soiled and generally unkempt or unrealistically neat and wrinkle-free, MIB have on occasion displayed a very unusual walking motion, moving about as if their hips were swivel joints, producing a gliding or rocking effect, often with the torso and legs seemingly moving off into opposite directions. **[2]** Some witnesses have indicated that MIB walk as if intoxicated. MIB have displayed a penchant for black Cadillacs or dark, large sedans. Some MIB display an unusual growth of hair, suggesting that their hair had grown back unevenly after having recently been shaved. Witnesses have identified the Great Seal of the United Nations on the lapels of some MIB.

MIB speak very distinctly. Either this distinctness results from their resonant eloquence or from a monotone **[Schwarz 1983:II, 242]**, singsong, or whining sound. Facially, MIB often possess an Oriental resemblance. UFO witnesses have reported men who appeared Italian, Burmese, or Indian. Jerry Clark **[1980:288]** has pointed out that in addition to the "racially ambiguous crypto-Asian type," MIB also display a normal appearance or speech, that is, "pure American or Spanish, or Portuguese or French or Norwegian." At this time there is some question as to the actual international distribution of the MIB experience. **[3]**

FIRST PERSON ACCOUNTS

One could easily interpret Albert K. Bender's MIB experience [described earlier] as a psychological drama resulting from a combination of his bizarre interests and the stress his close friends placed upon him to reveal his secret; indeed, it would be hard to dispute this. The challenge to this view as a general interpretation of all MIB accounts stems from the fact that reliable witnesses, who neither sleep in rooms with artificial bats and spiders nor hang pictures of vampires and werewolves on their walls, also report encounters with MIB. Such a case involved 27-year-old Michael Elliot [pseudonym]. The following memorat was collected from Mr. Elliot on 13 May 1982:

It was mid-November of 1980, Wednesday or Thursday, and I was doing research on flying saucers. It was a strange day, weather-wise, with erratic shifts of rain and wind and sun. It would get very blustery, and then it would become very calm. It was approximately 4:30pm and already on the dark side. I had been reading in a nearby university library for about four hours. I sat alone in a wing facing a large window to the south and stacks of books to my right running for some six rows behind me. I had the table closest to the window, facing the window. Without any sound to indicate that someone was approaching me from behind, I noticed from the corner of my right eye what I supposed was a man's black pant leg. He was wearing rather worn black leather shoes.... A man moved around the table to the chair opposite where I sat and stood silently, for about three seconds, with his back to the window, before sitting down very mechanically, straight and very affected....

He had a dark complexion, but not Oriental or Indian, but dark. He had black hair with something of the greasy look, looking somewhat 'Punk' by today's standards. He was very thin, with a chiselled nose and chin, and had sunken eyes. The man wore a black suit that needed ironing and possibly cleaning. He had on a white shirt and a black Texan-like string tie. Later when he rose to leave, I remember noting that the suit was much too large for him, despite his being over six feet, as I estimated it....

Now the man asked me if I had ever seen a flying saucer.... I curtly told him that at the moment I wasn't particularly interested in whether flying saucers were physical, extraterrestrial craft. I found the stories about them interesting. Well, I thought the guy was going to come unglued! He became highly agitated and said in a voice much too loud for use in a library: "Flying saucers are the most important fact of the century, and you're not interested!?"... I couldn't believe it was happening to me, and I was getting a bit fearful. I was beginning to think that he was more than just a nut. I felt that he might be dangerous. I tried to calm him. Finally he said nothing... He stood up, not like you or I would, but as if he were mechanically lifted. He looked real awkward... Placing his hand on my shoulder he said something like "Go well in your purpose." It sounded religious and I remember thinking that he was going to leave some proselytizing religious tracts with me. I didn't look up to see him go.

Within, say, ten seconds, great fear overwhelmed me and for the first time I entertained the idea that this man was otherworldly. Really, I was very frightened. I got up, walked two steps in the direction he had left in, turned around, and returned again to my seat. Got up again. I was highly excited and finally walked around the stacks to the reference desk and nobody was behind the desk. In fact, I could see no one at all in the library. I've gone to graduate school, and I've never been in a library when there wasn't somebody there! No one was even at the information desk across the room. I was close to panicking and went quickly back to my desk. I sat down and tried to calm myself. In about an hour I rose to leave the library. There were two librarians behind each of the two desks! **[Rojcewicz 1984:163-165]**

The Second first-person narrative comes from journalist and noted UFO investigator and author John A. Keel. Within a year of launching his full-time investigation of UFOs in 1966, Keel found that

"the phenomenon had zeroed in on me, just as it had done with British newspaper editor Arthur Shuttlewood and so many others":

My telephone ran amok first, with mysterious strangers calling day and night to deliver bizarre messages "from the space people" [emphasis in original]. Then I catapulted into the dream-like fantasy of demonology. I kept rendevous with black Cadillacs on Long Island, and when I tried to pursue them they would disappear impossibly on dead-end roads. Throughout 1967, I was called out in the middle of the night to go on silly wild-goose chases and try to affect "rescues" [emphasis in original] of troubled contactees. Luminous aerial objects seemed to know where I was going and where I had been. I would check into a motel at random only to find that someone had made a reservation in my name and had even left a string of nonsense messages for me. I was plagued by impossible coincidences, and some of my closest friends in New York, none of whom were conversant with the phenomenon, began to report strange experiences of their own - poltergeists erupted in their apartments, ugly smells of hydrogren sulfide haunted them. One girl suffered an inexplicable two-hour mental blackout while she was sitting under a hair dryer. More than once I woke up in the middle of the night to find myself unable to move, with a dark apparition standing over me. **[Keel 1976a:255]**

ANALOGOUS TRADITIONS

As a master shape-shifter, the Devil can appear in any form he desires: monster, animal, or man. In 1584 Reginald Scott **[1972:86]** described the Devil as ugly and having black skin, and possessing a monstrous form. The earliest depiction of the Devil as a man was reported by J. Charles le Chauve in 1902 **[Wall 1968:69]**. In a Greek manuscript of the 11th and 12th centuries, the Devil appears human and black. The connection here with the "Men in Black" is obvious.

Like the MIB who often walk awkwardly or fail to comprehend or accomplish simple tasks, the Devil of tradition also possesses some defect. Colin de Plancy, to whom the Devil appeared frequently in the first quarter of the 19th century, maintained that the Devil received most of his deformities from man, for "God had decided that whatever men attribute to him, he must retain" **[Seligman 1948:162]**.

Historian Marion Starkey **[1969:234]** has noted that the Reverend Cotton Mather's "black man" possessed more the spirit of a poltergeist, or the "comic devil" of the early miracle plays. The Devil, as Mather saw him, "was ubiquitous, and as such damnably dangerous and eternally a nuisance, but as little dignified as the worm that eats up the garden." As a comic devil, the MIB possess a nature very similar to the mythological figure of the Trickster. The Trickster is known to play pranks upon people and often falls victim to the vengeance of those he has injured **[Radin 1956]**. The Trickster is both subhuman and superhuman, bestial and divine. C.G. Jung **[1973:136]** identified the Trickster as an archetypal shadow figure that possesses a "compensatory relationship to the 'saint.' " Douglas Hill has written in *Man, Myth and Magic* the following:

Trickster is comic relief; he is psychic catharsis on a deep and vital level; he is a hero whose own evolution perhaps mirrors that of mankind toward a higher consciousness and social maturity. And embodying all these essentials, he is deathless - no ethnological museum piece but alive and flourishing today as in the primal past. **[Steiger 1977:214]**

Brad Steiger **[1977:211]** has asked if it is possible that the MIB function as "tutors," whose lesson to humanity is to stand up and assume a directed and purposeful control of our lives.

There has been some serious discussion **[Bearden 1980:45-73; Keel 1976b:5-6; Steiger 1978:121]** that MIB and perhaps UFOs in general are related to the Tibetan mystical tradition of the "tulpas." A tulpa is a materialized thought-form and thus may be related in part to holographic images. W.Y. Evans-Wentz wrote the following:

Inasmuch as the mind creates the world of appearances, it can create any particular object desired. The process consists of giving palpable being to a visualization, in very much the same manner as an architect gives concrete expression in three dimensions to his abstract concepts after first having given them expression in the two dimensions of his blue print. **[1968:29]**

In *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, Alexandra David-Neel **[1973:315]** revealed that she herself had succeeded in creating a tulpa, which after some time became malignant and bold, escaping her control.

From this perspective it can be said that MIB are materialized tulpoidal forms stablized by collective fear: fear of "Big Brother," of terrorism and violence, of hijackings, of all forms of personal intimidation. Quantum physicist Thomas Bearden **[1980:69]** has conjectured that "the men-in-black (*sic*) syndrome is based on our unconscious tuning; since each of us has some unpleasantness in the unconscious, sometimes the tuned-in men-in-black can be very nasty indeed." John A. Keel **[1976a:280]** insists that "in psychic phenomena and demonology we find that seemingly solid objects are materialized and dematerialized or apported."

Michael Talbot has pointed out parallels between the MIB and an enigmatic group known inside the Eastern mystical tradition as the "Brothers of the Shadow." According to Talbot, the "Brothers of the Shadow" are: "...cunning and evil; intent upon keeping any student of the occult from finding out the proverbial answer. In mystical jargon this answer is the 'Veil of Isis', and is synonymous with

the 'Great Secret' of Maerterlink... The Brothers of the Shadow, like the MIB, are known for threatening students whenever they get too close to lifting the Veil of Isis." **[Steiger 1978:114]**

Encounters with MIB often leave witnesses confused and disoriented. Vertigo, nausea, or even amnesia lasting for days are common symptoms. Are the "Men in Black" the dark but complementary factor with which the modern age must reconcile for the purpose of psychic wholeness? Historian William Irwin Thompson **[1981:248]** has argued that in our utopian fantasy of technology, we have created a sinister mirror image of the utopian dweller: "In the jungle of Guyana with Reverend Jim Jones, or in the space colonies of NASA, 'man,' will painfully discover that wherever he goes, he brings his evil along with him." The MIB, perhaps, represent human fear and deceit made flesh. Michael Elliot and John A. Keel displayed fear in the presence of the MIB, a common response elicited by the Devil and his cohorts.

The Devil's powers of mind have no peer, outside of God. "His powers were enormous," Keith Thomas **[1971:470]** insists, "for he had himself once been one of God's angels and he knew all the secrets and mysteries of the natural world." The MIB in the Elliot account did not reveal to him an unusual secret about himself or his family, as other MIB reportedly do, but the "coincidence" of the man's arrival precisely at the outset of Elliot's UFO research must not be totally without meaning. In the John A. Keel memorat he indicates that when he "catapulted into the dream-like fantasy of demonology," UFOs seemed to know where he was going and where he had been. Someone or something knew which motel he would randomly check into and even made a reservation for him there. Coincidence or "synchronicity" **[Jung 1973; Von Franz 1980]** often plays a very active role within the larger context of UFOs. Some researchers see this as an indication of the presence of the paranormal. Some people seem to know where and when to see a UFO, as if instructed to do so **[Rogo 1977:93]**. Noting that paranormal events reported in connection with UFO close encounters seem to have become the rule rather than the exception, Jacques Vallée, Ph.D. **[1975:93]** has stated that "such events might take the form of minor 'unexplained coincidence.'" Omniscience and coincidence both find correlatives also in the context of the tradition of the Devil.

Since the publication of Gray Barker's story **[1956]** of the Bender incident, MIB traditionally work in teams of three. Elliot and Dr. Herbert Hopkins mentioned only one MIB, and so we see a discontinuity between experience and tradition. Keel's memorat does not give the exact number, but elsewhere Keel has noted MIB in threes. The number three has its own importance inside the devil frame of reference. The "Trinity of Evil," consisting of the Devil, the old serpent mentioned in the Apocalypse, and his two lieutenants provide the correlative to the three MIB. A French manuscript of the history of the Holy Grail contains a drawing of the "Trinity of Evil" pondering the birth of the magician Merlin **[Wall 1968:27-28]**.

Earlier in this article it was stated that the "Men in Black" have associations with the military, particularly the Air Force, since the 1960s and '70s. With the publication of Donald E. Keyhoe's book *The Flying Saucers Are Real* **[1950]**, many people believed in the conspiracy theory, charging that the Air Force consciously withheld UFO information from the general public. **[4]** MIB, some felt, functioned as a means of discouraging the dissemination of UFO lore. In the framework of the devil tradition, Scott's *Discourse of Witchcraft* **[1584]** lists the military roll of the infernal forces. The Duke of Amazeroth, for example, "a sort of brigadier general," commanded some 60 legions **[Wall 1968:25-26]**.

Angelou S. Rappaport's *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel* points out the danger one faces when entering into places which demons frequent. "To go alone into such places is dangerous, and the eves of Wednesday and Saturday were considered dangerous times," Rappaport notes, "for on those days Agrath roves about in the air accompanied by 18 myriads of evil spirits" **[Keel 1976a:94]**. Michael Elliot's MIB experience took place on Wednesday or Thursday near evening. Elliot mentioned peculiar weather that November day, sometimes stormy, sometimes clear. In 16th-century England, the Devil, according to Keith Thomas **[1971:472]**, "provoked high winds and thunderstorms." Whether the "Wednesday factor" is continuous with the MIB tradition cannot be determined, since the necessary data do not exist at this time. However, John A. Keel **[1976a:146]** has discovered that one is most likely to witness a UFO on a Wednesday or Saturday evening, from 10pm to 2am in the area close to a magnetic fault.

A most peculiar feature of the Elliot case involves a reversal of the intimidation factor, a key component in the MIB tradition. By not attempting to dissuade Elliot, and by indirectly encouraging him to learn about "flying saucers," the MIB acted against the generic grain. Experience here lies in polar relationship to tradition and so structurally speaking can still be said to be connected with tradition. Although here it functions in a manner inverse to the traditional norm, the intimidation factor reversal has a correlative within the wider structure of UFOs. Many UFO "contactees," individuals in constant communication with otherworldly entities whom they serve as channels or mouthpieces, receive "messages" via "voices," telepathy, and automatic writing. **[5]** Otherworldly entities use these "messages" to exhort contactees to seek out and better understand "flying saucers" and their occupants so that life on Earth can continue **[David 1967:74-75]**.

A feature of great interest from the folklorists' perspective is found in the last line of the Keel

memorat: "More than once I woke up in the middle of the night to find myself unable to move, with a dark apparition standing over me." It is clear from this passage, as well as from Keel's chapter on "bedroom invaders" in *Strange Creatures from Space and Time* [1970], that Keel has undergone an attack from what David J. Hufford, Ph.D., has called the "Old Hag." Many people who are "hagged" – who wake up to find that they cannot move their bodies – often report seeing or feeling a sinister entity, or a glowing object near where they were lying. While being ridden by the Hag, the individual may hear feet shuffling, or laughter, or smell some foul odour, elements similar to Keel's experiences. "The Old Hag, then," according to Hufford [1982:234], "can be as easily assimilated to UFO beliefs as it can to vampirism, witchcraft, or anxiety neurosis."

Sidney J. Jansma [1980:70] insists that UFOs in general are demonic powers, pointing out that their ability to violate the laws of nature, "the coldness of UFOnauts, their sulfuric stench, and their lying also testify to their Hellish origin." According to Kurt Seligman [1948:152], "the evil one wants to pretend that he does not exist... But he is legion...he is a gangster on the lookout for a kidnapping...for the devil is ever changing in man's mind... The devil likes to be modern."

There is good evidence today to suggest that the enigmatic "Men in Black" visit not only witnesses to UFOs, but also witnesses to "monsters," Bigfoot-like creatures, and a variety of nonordinary entities. This observation is a most important one, since it points to the interrelationships between UFOs and various folklore belief traditions. Brad Steiger [1978:114], who, like John A. Keel, has been brave enough to publish personal accounts of MIB encounters, has been "convinced through special investigation and firsthand experiences that this phenomenon euphemistically known as the Men-in-Black is *very real* and that its victims are not simply suffering from particularly eerie delusions" [emphasis mine].

CONCLUSION

This article, while arguing for the relatedness of UFOs, the "Men in Black," and the ancient figure of the Devil, likewise argues for their discreteness. These separate but not separated phenomena form a continuum of folk concepts and beliefs in "other worlds." Scholars studying the MIB phenomenon must not fail to distinguish observations, descriptions, and interpretations of the MIB experience. Confusing these factors when dealing with belief materials in the past has prevented scholars from appreciating the phenomenological continuities between UFO-related experiences and older folklore traditions, as well as resulting in difficulties of academic attitude, method and taxonomy [Rojcewicz 1985].

An informant's account might begin with a description of the "flying saucer" and finish with the inference that abominable snowmen are its occupants [Hufford 1977:241]. Some scholars have failed to distinguish features of experience from interpretive features, because they have maintained, at least implicitly, the condescending attitude that what the scholar knows is "reality," and what the informants know is "folklore."

This problematic attitude has led some folklorists to declare that the question of the objective nature of the phenomenon behind a body of beliefs does not constitute a worthwhile area of folklore investigation [Dégh 1977; Ward 1977]. David J. Hufford [1982] has argued instead that believed accounts that look to repeating occurrence as their authority must be evaluated as to their objective nature before the question of their stability and distribution can adequately be answered. There exists no good epistemological and ontological reasons to distinguish descriptions from explanations if the folklorist cannot seriously entertain the possibility that a real experience lies behind traditional belief.

Facing what we will not seriously entertain, we face ourselves as we really are, positioned squarely in the tension between a fearful will and an actual situation. Experience, however, will not be reduced by timidity.

NOTES

A shorter version of this article was presented at the Pennsylvania Folklore Society 1985 Annual Meeting. "Folklore in the Modern World" session, 16 March, Philadelphia. Special thanks to David J. Hufford, Pennsylvania State College of Medicine, Department of Behavioral Science, for his general counsel and helpful comments relative to this article. I am also indebted to Ron MacKay, Northeastern University, Department of English, and poet Ron Price of Philadelphia for the time they took to read this article and offer their commentary.

■ 1 - My conversation with Professor Radar was conducted by phone from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 8 March 1983. ■ 2 - My own fieldwork has uncovered two cases wherein this peculiar walking motion was described by witnesses. John A. Keel has likewise reported similar features of the movement of MIB. Recently, filmmaker and actor John Sayles has comically portrayed this peculiarity of the MIB in his film *The Brother from Another Plant* [1984]. Sayles himself plays one of the two 'Men in Black.' ■ 3 - UFO investigator and author Raymond E. Fowler has written that "MIB reports are not limited to the United States," and then mentions an MIB case from Mexico City [1982:218]. John A. Keel has reported that MIB have been encountered "from Sweden to Spain, Australia to South Africa" [1975:141]. Margaret Sachs states that although MIB have been active on the American UFO scene since 1947, they "rarely appear in foreign countries" [1980:196]. ■ 4 - Many magazine articles were published on "flying saucers" in the United States

from 1949 to 1951. *True* magazine published Keyhoe's article, "The Flying Saucers Are Real," which became one of the most widely read articles in American publishing history. Keyhoe developed this piece into a full-length book by the same title, which he published in 1950. ■ 5 - One can read about "channels" and "contactees" and the "messages" they transmit to chosen individuals on the Earth in Brad Steiger, *Revelation: The Divine Fire* **[1973]**. David Michael Jacobs situates the "contactee" phenomenon inside the overall history of the modern age of UFOs in his excellent work, *The UFO Controversy in America* **[1975:108-131]**.

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A LIVING DINOSAUR? In search of Mokele-Mbembe

by Roy P. Mackal.

EJ Brill, Leiden, Netherlands; 1987, hb £16.95/$24.95; pp340, photos, drawings, map, references, bib, index.

One feels that this story should really be heard from the lips of the author himself; preferably late at night huddled around a camp fire deep in the jungle, safe in an orange-lit circle of humanity, while out there, in the dark, the wild things watch and wait – and perhaps listen too – while the Indiana Jones of the ISC recounts his adventures in the heart of the Dark Continent.

Reading the book in bed in the UK may be a poor substitute for the real thing. But still one sits back in admiration as – armed with an elephant gun, the mandatory dinosaur picture-book, and a generous supply of soft toilet paper (less risky than parasite-encrusted leaves) – Dr Roy Mackal twice ventures into the swampy morass of Equitorial Africa in search of a Lost World where not every long-dead animal stays extinct. His doggedness and bravery are remarkable. This, one thinks, is fieldwork with a vengence.

The slightly nineteenth century tone to the proceedings is set early on, by Bernard Heuvelmans' tub-thumping introduction to the story of "a gallant knight in search of a dreadful dragon" and by Mackal's own statement of his "objective [but] admittedly romantic" aims. But though one senses that the author derives a great deal of satisfaction from casting himself as the intrepid explorer, this adds to rather than detracts from the charm of the work. Mackal writes well, and –spurred on, perhaps, by a shortage of firm evidence for analysis – he devotes large portions of the book to a travelogue which brings the African swamplands to teeming life and makes for entertaining reading. Many of the author's expedition anecdotes will doubtless one day brighten the pages of some history of cryptozoological endeavour.

The meat of the book, though, is what it has to say about Mokélembémbe and other possible survivors from the Cretaceous era. Mackal believes that it is possible to identify up to seven potentially unknown species which may be lurking in the Congo, many of whose descriptions have previously been lumped together with Mokélembémbe reports.

Aside from MM itself – which Mackal thinks may well be a small sauropod dinosaur – the author details the evidence for Emelantouka, a horned quadruped not dissimilar to the dinosaur Monoclonius; *Mbielu-mbielu-mbielu*, 'the animal with planks growing out of its back', which though described only vaguely (and then by few witnesses) sounds remarkably like some sort of Stegosaur; and *Nguma-monene*, which if it exists may turn out to be a gigantic monitor lizard.

Other creatures in Mackal's dossier include *Ndendeki*, a giant turtle; Mahamba, a very large crocodile, and *Ngoima*, a huge bird which the author tentatively identifies as an out-of-place crowned eagle.

Mackal believes – and who are we to doubt him? – that the witnesses and informants he interviewed were both sincere and genuinely ignorant of dinosaurs, picture-book reconstructions of which were duly shown to them. There was no discernable tendency to please the expedition members by telling them what they wanted to hear, and an impressive consistency is to be found in the MM descriptions gathered. Recent eyewitness reports recounted in the text (a welcome addition to the literature) are by no means unconvincing.

Mackal sticks closely in all this to the ISC's scientific 'line', and hardly ever detours into descriptions of local beliefs concerning Mokéle-mbémbe. There are, it must be said, constant reminders that many Congolese regard MM with awe and often refuse to discuss it for fear of provoking the creature's wrath – a belief which significantly hindered the expeditions' attempts to gather information. But little attempt is made to explain the effect which such folklore may have had on the reports which were made, nor its impact on pygmy society in general.

The folkloristic details which do appear are often of considerable interest. It appears that locals at Lake Tele (an MM stomping ground) believe the lake waters to have therapeutic properties and say that such water, placed in bottles, evaporates more rapidly than usual. If a *Moaka* (a small red fish) is placed in a bottle of Tele water, it will disappear, they say. FT readers will also be intrigued by reported descriptions of the

Ngoima, which bird is said to carry off young children in the approved Fortean manner.

There is also an interesting description of a peculiarly detailed case of deja-vu, experience by the author at an abandoned swamp house named Bete-Tolo.

Mackal rounds off his account with a brief position statement and concludes the book with a most useful reprinting of various expedition findings and reports. The final verdict, delivered cautiously, is that the Congolese swamps contain at least three unknown animals – the MM, Emelantouka, and Mbielu-mbielu-mbielu / Nguma-monene – and that these creatures are, respectively, most probably a small sauropod dinosaur, a species of aquatic rhinoceros, and a giant, elongated monitor lizard.

A living dinosaur? is sumptiously produced on heavy paper by Brill, a Dutch firm which has been around since the 17th century, and which produced Oudemans' classic tome on the sea-serpent in 1892. They have done Mackal and the ISC proud, but it must be said that the book contains an unusually large number of literals – a problem caused, one presumes, by the difficulty of proof-reading a work in a foreign language.

This is a minor quibble and should not detract from the recognition of this book as a fitting monument to Mackal's considerable determination. It is one of the best cryptozoological works of the decade.

Mike Dash

LOST LANDS AND SUNKEN CITIES

by Nigel Pennick.

Fortean Tomes, 1 Shoebury Rd, East Ham, London E6 2 AQ, 1987; pb £8.50, pp176, index, bib.

The torrential rain and resultant flooding which we in Wales experienced during the autumn and winter of 1987-8 forges an immediate personal link with the content of Nigel Pennick's new book, and looking at some of the photographs of flooding makes us realise how insignificant our own minor inundations really are. For over the centuries, there have been some major disasters for the people living around the coasts of Britain, disasters that have changed the coastline significantly.

Lost lands and sunken cities is a fascinating study of these changes, the historical background to them, and also similar events elsewhere. Following chapters on major historical coastal cataclysms in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, on flooding around our coasts – especially the 1953 national disaster – on the Biblical Deluge, on Atlantis and other sunken civilisations, and on legends and traditions of lost lands, Nigel Pennick makes a circular tour of Britain's coastline, studying each area in detail and giving the history and legend of each area of lost land; both the major ones, like Lyonesse and Cantref y Gwaelod, and minor ones in areas that we never realised had changed at all.

The erosion is still going on, of course, and there are dramatic modern photographs to demonstrate this. The illustrations are very numerous, and help greatly to bring home the drama of the coastal changes that have taken place and are still taking place. Fortean Tomes' second volume is attractively designed and produced, and the book makes enthralling reading for anyone fascinated by little-known aspects of Britain's history and geography.

Janet Bord

INTRUDERS: The incredible visitations at Copley Woods

by Bud Hopkins.

Random House, NY, 1987; hb $17.95, pp224.

With novelist Whitley Strieber's account of his alleged abduction by alien beings – *Communion* – hovering near the top of the bestseller lists [in several countries - Ed.] no one should be startled to find another new work treating the same subject, given publishers' penchants for bandwagons. Literary incest in this case, however, is more than skin deep. In fact, the author of **Intruders**, New York abstract artist Budd Hopkins, plays a major role in *Communion*; it was Hopkins, a specialist in UFO abduction cases, to whom Strieber turned for help when he thought he was losing his mind.

Hopkins arranged for Dr Donald Klein of the NY State Psychiatric Center to serve as Strieber's hypnotherapist, and later introduced him to a small support group of "abductees" who claimed similar experiences; ie. to have been taken bodily aboard flying saucers against their will, and subjected to physical examination. The two men have subsequently suffered a falling out and are no longer on speaking terms.

Without choosing sides, what are terrestrial readers supposed to make of such cosmic shenanigans? Strieber, in a style reminiscent of a space-age Carlos Castaneda, believes he was kidnapped by "visitors" who appear to share a hive-like mind. Though their origins and motives remained obscure, Strieber speculated that the extraterrestrial hive "seeks the very depth of the soul; it seeks communion."

Hopkins, on the other hand, believes they may have something more mundane and considerably less cerebral in mind. The case that **Intruders** argues for UFOs and their mysterious occupants, assumin either one has any physical validity, is one of a widespread programme of genetic engineering aimed at human beings.

Focussing on a series of bizarre, but apparently UFO-related, events that befell the 'Davis' family of Indianapolis (virtually every case history recounted by Hopkins is anonymous), **Intruders** uncovers evidence of an alien conspiracy that makes the fantasies of Lyndon LaRouche look like the daydreams of a rosy-cheeked Boy Scout pulling merit badge duty. Before long, Hopkins has amassed a mountain of anecdotal testimony, mostly obtained under regressive hypnosis, that points to extraterrestrial abductions of individuals beginning in childhood and continuing down to the present. Unfortunately, much of the evidence Hopkins adduces is

contaminated by vaguely remembered dreams (not to mention by hypnosis itself, which is notoriously problematic), a plague that also pesters Strieber's own book.

Still, the scenario Hopkins ultimately arrives at is not quite so outlandish as it might be, given 1› our own present state of genetic engineering technology, with which we are already able to clone various organisms; and 2› the assumption that any intelligent life-form – of which Carl Sagan is constantly reminding us that there must be "*bill*-yuns and *bill*-yuns" – capable of interstellar travel, would be at least as proficient in such techniques as we are.

What Hopkins proposes, if you haven't guessed by now, is that our alienaut visitors have been collecting samples of both human sperm and ova for their own, as yet unrevealed, purposes. Male abductees counseled by Hopkins have reported instances of what amounts to extraterrestrial rape, while their female counterparts recall operations similar to both artificial insemination and laproscopy (the extraction by tube of eggs from the ovaries). In at least on instance – that of 'Kathy Davis' – the aliens supposedly impregnated her during the course of one abduction, and then extracted the foetus before term during another. She was later abducted once more and allowed to see her female child, a hybrid of human and alien genes.

Regardless of the objective reality of the experience, says Hopkins, its victims are often left frightened and bewildered, as was Strieber. But we humans may yet have the last laugh; two of the males interviewed by Hopkins had had vasectomies before their abductions.

Dennis Stacy

THE FEMALE POPE: The mystery of Pope Joan

by Rosemary and Darroll Pardoe.

Crucible (Thorsons, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 2RQ); 1988 hb £8.95, 112pp, illus, index.

Subtitled "the first complete documentation of the facts behind the legend", this is another of this excellent series on historical enigmas. Since the mid–13th century until now, the story of the transvestite who became pope and whose secret was discovered when she gave birth in the street has had remarkable resilience. The Pardoes tell a fascinating tale of how the episode of a eunuch Patriarch in Constantinople, Nicetas (766–780 AD), was seemingly altered and set in Rome by disgruntled writers of the mendicant orders to malign the papacy, and subsequently given renewed life by the Protestants. The apparent proofs of Pope Joan's existence (an inscribed stone, a statue of a woman and child, the avoidance by later popes of the street where she is supposed to have given birth and the pierced seat believed to have been used to establish the sex of the pontiffs and avoid making the same mistake again) are all examined. There is also a more general discussion of women cross–dressers, who have provoked great interest and strong emotions from mediaeval times to the present day.

Paul Sieveking

SOVIET SUBMARINE OPERATIONS IN SWEDISH WATERS, 1980–1986

by Milton Leitenberg.

Praeger Publishers, 1 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10010; 1987, pb £8.85, pp199, notes & refs, index, tables, map.

This noteworthy volume, published in association with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, deals with a topic which has been cropping up in FT pages with increasing frequency: incursions into Scandinavian waters by so-called 'mystery submarines' which may or may not belong to the Soviet Union.

One would hardly expect the CSIS to propound the folkloric approach to which FT's Swedish correspondent Sven Rosén has drawn attention [**FT49** p63] , let alone the more fantastic Atlantean/alien USO theories which crop up from time to time. It is evident that the author is unaware of the tradition of USO reports discussed by Fort.

And yet... As a researcher at the Swedish Institute for International Affairs between 1979 and 1987, Leitenberg has thoroughly familiarised himself with the military and political institutions of his hosts, and he provides an intriguing analysis of developments in Sweden as 'submarine' incursions increased in frequency and audacity in the early 1980s.

Swedish internal affairs – which are hardly considered in the occasional snippets appearing in the British press – must be taken into account in any discussion of the folklore or (as *Magonia* might put it) the psychosociological dynamics which underlie the phenomenon, and the author provides material which would be of value in such a discussion.

The book opens with a summary of violations reported between 1962 and 1986, totalling some 315 reports in all, and attention is also drawn to the number of incursions into Swedish territory by Warsaw Pact surface vessels and aircraft. These, too, have increased in the 1980s.

Leitenberg pinpoints 1980 as the year in which a 'new pattern' of incursions began to emerge. This was, incidentally, a year before the celebrated 'Whisky on the Rocks' incident which, in the public imagination at least, appeared to spark off the reports made between 1981 and the present day.

Analogous events in waters off Japan, Italy, Denmark, Greenland, Norway and Finland are also recounted. It is interesting, here, to note that the Greenland report comes from Disco Bay, a location which has cropped up more than once in FT, and one which is allegedly the haunt of a black water-monster [**FT41** pp67-8; **FT46** p29; *Books* pp314 & 733]. Leitenberg's book concludes with a 50-page analysis of possible Soviet and Swedish motives.

Connoisseurs of the Fortean explanation will find much of interest here. It is, for example, interesting to read the opinions (pp132-3) of the Swedish naval captain who believes that the

Soviets are demonstrating the inadequacy of his navy's anti-submarine capability in order that, with the increased funds which will be voted, the Swedes will be better able to destroy NATO submarines that use Scandinavian territorial waters as a haven from which to attack Soviet Baltic shipping in the event of a war!

The author's approach is, however, a doggedly literal one, and little attention is given to any but political and military explanations for the reports. No doubt a sociologist would approach the subject in a different and perhaps more productive way; but Leitenberg provides a cogent, even readable, summary of the rationalist case. It is a point of view which deserves a full discussion in our pages, for only the most ardent irrationalist would argue that the USSR has not been responsible for some at least of the submarine incursions reported in the 1980s.

In the meantime, it is worth drawing attention to this book's price – unusually low for what is essentially an academic tome – and sobriety. A valuable work.

Mike Dash

CAROLINA BAYS, MIMA MOUNDS, SUBMARINE CANYONS and other topographical phenomena

compiled by William R. Corliss

Sourcebook Project, Box 107, Glen Arm, MD 21057, USA, 1988; hb $17.95, pp239, 5 indexes, illus.

Having staked out the ground in astronomy and geophysics, Corliss' projected 25 volume 'Catalog of Anomalies' (of which this is the 8th) steps boldly into the landscape of topological enigmas. Here you will find all manner of bizarre formations, natural and puzzling, from oriented patterns of lakes and craters to rippling rocks, from undersea canyons to regular moundfields, from rock 'cities' to continental drift, from high-altitude marine formations to a variety of strange holes in the earth.

As usual it it impossible to do justice to the scope and to the wealth of information which Corliss has rescued from oblivion in his heroic sweeps of the literature past and present. Each subject is rated as to its anomalous value and explanations, then examples follow with references. These volumes should be standard references in every library.

RJMR

RELIGION INC.: The Church of Scientology

by Stewart Lamont.

Harrap 1986; hb £9.95; pp192, index, photos, glossary.

BARE-FACED MESSIAH: The true story of L. Ron Hubbard

by Russell Miller.

Michael Joseph 1987; hb £12.95; pp390, index, photos, bib.

The death of Lafayette Ron Hubbard was officially announced in 1986, ending years of debate as to his whereabouts. At the time there was a brief flurry of media interest in Hubbard's Church of Scientology, but little has been written since then. These two books are the first to deal with the whole of the man's reign. Beyond their timing, however, it is difficult to find anything in common between the two, for they are very different both in content and in quality.

Lamont's book is an analytical study of the church as a whole. Despite a false start with a fictionalised account of Hubbard's supposed burial at sea, Lamont covers the church's belief systems and its methods of operation, as well as the financial aspects and its structure. Unlike Miller, Lamont has been given access to official church documents and (possibly as a result) is more willing to consider the Scientologists' point of view.

Miller's attempts to secure church approval to interview members were insufficiently diplomatic. Consequently he has had to rely largely on the opponents of Hubbard and his movement for his information. This not only throws doubt on some of his material, but also encourages overtones of glib sensationalism, a consequence of the stream-of-consciousness style of narrative. By concentrating on Hubbard's personality, Miller fails to examine the wider aspects of the church, such as the detail of its recruitment methods. It comes as little surprise to discover that Miller's previous tomes include pieces on Getty senior and Hugh Hefner, doubtless written in a similar style. ("Sex, power-plays, intrigue... I lived it!" - Victor Lowndes on the Hefner book.)

Both books examine the allegations of 'mind bending' levelled at the church. Miller tends to focus on the failures, false starts and more ludicrous aspects of its activities. A typical example is his description of the fiasco surrounding the presentation of the world's first 'clear' (person clear of all neuroses) in August 1950 at the Shrine auditorium in San Fransisco. The female 'clear', Sonya Bianca, was presented to an audience of thousands, but failed not only to remember "every moment of her life in the fullest detail", as Dianetic theory demanded, but also to recall what colour Hubbard's tie was when he turned his back Lamont is rather more serious in his approach, talking to members of the church and examining in some detail the rigorous and repetitive auditing process involved in becoming a clear and, finally, an 'Operating Thetan' – what a Theosophist might call a liberated astral body. We see how the course fees slowly build up, the Money-Back-No-Questions-Asked guarantee disappears, and the auditing process becomes more intensive. This is a complex section for the unititiated, but repays study.

Ultimately, Miller's book is truly a story of L. Ron Hubbard, sensationalizing his life and loves; power, corruption and lies, cliché after sorry cliché. 'The Commodore' comes across as a man with a taste for bizarre costumes who screams at police cars; in fact a well-rounded case of paranoid schizophrenia. Miller, on the other hand, remains the 'hard-

hitting journo' – with a taste for creative fiction. His book seems destined for the very top of the remainder shelves.

Lamont's work is undoubtably good, and despite its early publication soon after LRH's death, should maintain its position for some time as a standard text of the movement. There are obviously some small gripes. A bibliography would have been useful, and the true story behind Hubbard's 'trips to heaven' 42 and 43 trillion years ago (as quoted by Miller) would undoubtably have been interesting. From Miller's description, it seems Hubbard found something remeniscent of a film set out of the Wild West. But for all his readability, Miller is difficult to take seriously, and it is Lamont's work which should appear first on the shelves of the interested Fortean.

Richard Furlong

ALSO RECEIVED

● **THREE BOOKS OF OCCULT PHILOSOPHY** by Henry Cornelius Agrippa. A facsimile reprint of the English translation of 1651, and the first complete edition of all three books since that date. A compendious work of magic and occult lore, originally published in Latin in 1533. Much curious material, and of considerable historical interest. With a new index of authors cited, by Steve Moore & Stephen Ronan. *Chthonios Books, 6 Waldegrave Rd, London SE19 2AJ; 1987; hb £36.50, pp583, index.*

● **KING CHEETAH: The story of the quest** by Lena Godsall Bottriell. First scientifically recognised in 1926, the King Cheetah has been declared a freak mutant or a distinct species. This is the entertaining story of the search for specimens in southern Africa, where, it turns out, this animal shows all the signs of a species in the making. This valuable book is marred by the complete absence of paragraph indenting! *EJ Brill, Leiden, 1987; hb $24.95, £16.95; pp242, bib, photos, maps.*

● **A.E. WAITE: Magician of many parts**. A biography by R.A. Gilbert of Waite (1857–1942), the influential poet, mystic, and occultist who laid the foundations for modern schools of occultism and ritual magic with his extensive translations and innovations of traditional ritual and literature. *Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, Northants, 1987; hb £12.95, pp208, appendixes, notes, bib, index.*

● **UNKNOWN GWENT** (1987?, £2.95, pp110); **THE FOLKLORE OF GLAMORGAN** (1987?, £3.50, PP118); **FOLKLORE OF GWENT** (1986, £3.50, PP126), all by Alan Roderick. Really useful, fresh collections of little-known local lore and legend from these two Welsh counties, indexed and illustrated. Commendable effort of a community publisher – there should be more like these enterprising folk. *Village Publishing, 13 Victoria St, Cwmbran, Gwent, NP44 3JS.*

● **THE CHOKING DOBERMAN and other 'new' urban legends** by Jan Harold Brunvand. Brunvand's second famous collection and discussion of foaftales. The pop academic approach seems fairly sterile to Forteans, but a useful reference to have in a handy edition. *Penguin Books, London, 1987; pb £3.95, pp240, appendixes, bib, index.*

● **THE SPIRIT OF MASONRY** by William Hutchinson, introduction by Trevor Stewart. Facsimile reprint of 1775 edition. *Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, Northants, 1987; £8.99.*

● **MIEUX COMPRENDRE SES RÊVES par la parapsychologie.** First book by our Belgian correspondent, Henri Prémont. *RTL Edition, Luxembourg, 1987; FF79, pp144.*

● **THE RELEVANCE OF BLISS**, by Nona Coxhead. A contemporary exploration of mystic experience with contributions from Rupert Sheldrake, Fritjof Capra, David Bohm et al. *Wildwood House, Hounslow, Middx, 1985; £5.95, pp184, bib, index.*

● **CELTIC MYTHOLOGY** by Ward Rutherford. The nature and influence of Celtic myth, from Druidism to Arthurian legend. *Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, Northants, 1987; £5.99, pp160, bib, index, photos.*

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 2.

aware that in attending to one aspect, the others are being neglected; and *every* aspect of publishing can become a full-time preoccupation. After many unavoidable setbacks Meurger's book should be out in early August, now with 320pp and many extra illustrations.

MIKE DASH FOR HOT SEAT

One of the remedies we have in mind is to relieve the word-processing bottleneck by training Mike Dash and installing him in the editorial rota. Mike has helped FT in many ways over the last few years. Not only is he a fine Fortean, with special interests in history and cryptozoology, but he has become increasingly indispensible. So, let's welcome Mike, whose seat in our unholy triumvirate is a fitting recognition of his persistence and talent.

Rod Parkes wrote from Hong Kong: "To whom does one address letters, when there are two editors?" Now there are three of us – sorry Ron – 'Dear Ed' would do.

A NEW FORTEAN

FT joint editor Paul Sieveking and Val Stevenson have had a son – Patrick Edward Amador de Giberne Sieveking – born on 2 Feb 1988, the Feast of Imbolc, Lupercalia and Candlemas, and a full moon.

JENNY RANDLES

Unreserved apologies are offered to Jenny Randles for the unintentioned slur on her credulity and professionalism by stating, in my review of *Sky Crash* [**FT49** p72] that she had been "severely criticized for errors of fact". My impression was based on correspondence in *Fate* between Jenny and Lucius Farish about a matter, which Jenny informs me, was a very small side-issue from the books main narrative. This little dispute can hardly be generalised into a "severe" critique of the whole book, as my carelessness implied.

Bob Rickard

sions from the dates: it was my intention to imply nothing more than the possibility that Mrs Dankbaar might have been in Rhodes at a time when she could have seen quantities of rock being dumped in the bay; and that such a sight could have remained in her mind, and may have influenced (either consciously or subconsciously) her alleged clairvoyant 'pinpointing' of the fist. I had imagined that this inference would have been obvious to my readers; as this is apparently not the case, I am happy to make myself clear on this point.

However, I did *not* imply, suggest, or even consider that Mrs Dankbaar might have "teamed up with some local crook" to actually *arrange* to have the fist dumped in the bay so that she could find it later. I would vigorously deny imputing criminal motives to anyone involved in the affair, and with regard to Brian Inglis' summary of my supposed "conspiracy story", I simply did not say it. The "conspiracy story" that Mr Inglis wishes to father upon me is entirely a fantasy of his own. It is a very interesting fantasy, and I thank him for sharing it with us, but it has nothing to do with me.

Mr Inglis is, of course, entitled to his opinion about the Colossus. I am also entitled to mine, which remains that the whole affair was a farce. Within the limitations of my source material mentioned above, I stand by the piece. If that makes me an ass, then I gladly accept the title.]

SON OF A GUN

Further details concerning the case of the 'miraculous bullet' [**FT49** pp.49-50] may be of interest. Battle 'R' was the Battle of Raymond, fought in Mississippi between Gens. Logan ('General L') and Gregg ('General G') as part of Ulysses Grant's Vicksburg campaign. Raymond itself is a small village about 15 miles SW of Jackson, Miss.

A re-examination of LeGrand Capers' account appears in the American journal *Military Affairs* (February 1981). The author, history of medicine specialist Prof. James O. Breedon, casts considerable doubt on the veracity of the tale, suggesting that it was intended by the author as a satirical comment on the spate of highly-embellished war memoirs appearing at the time.

In support of this contention, Breedon quotes from Capers' introduction – not reproduced in *The Lancet*, **FT**'s source:

"How common it is now-a-days, and how natural too, for men to tell wonderful stories about 'the war'; their desperate charges; hair-breadth escapes; numbers who have fallen victim to their feats of personal valour, etc., etc. Then every surgeon has performed any number of wonderful operations before unheard in the annals of surgery!"

Capers then offers his readers the 'miraculous bullet' tale as an example of his own *"daring exploits [and] remarkable surgical procedures."*

Breedon also points out that, though well-known to GS Gaillard, the *American Medical Weekly*'s editor, the author chose to submit his piece anonymously – presumably to dissociate himself from what he realised was an obvious hoax. Certainly Gaillard thought the story was fictional. Having determined the author's identity, he decided to print the piece with the addition of Capers' name, writing that "though indisposed to be the victim of *canards"* he was "unwilling to deprive the author of [his] contemplated fun" ['Miscellaneous', *AMW* I (1874) pp.263-4].

Two further points occur to me. First, a minor detail, the minnie ball was an early form of explosive (dum-dum) bullet, whose impact against the "father's"– left tibia would more likely entail the loss of that leg below the knee than result in two ricochets and a further flight of 150 yards.

Secondly, the assertion that the remains of the same ball were eventually removed from the *baby's* scrotum (a medical impossibility, surely?) itself hints that the story is an entertaining hoax. The neatness of the twists in Capers' tale (father's testicle to son's scrotum; father and mother marry and live happily ever after) suggest the coherence of fiction rather more than they do the messy uncertainties of 'real' history.

Mike Dash
Watford

GRAVES ZAPPED

I can shed a little light on the lightning zap of Graves Thomas [**FT49** p.13], as I was just across the state line in East Texas on the Memorial Day in question (25 May 1987). Thunderstorms and accompanying lightning *were* roaming the area; in fact, a friend and I were caught by a short-lived storm in pine woods near a small reservoir, and never before or since have I so feared for my life in the open air. Absolutely shattering bolts of lightning and no lag-time crescendos of thunder were striking all around. Standing soaking wet at the bottom of a pine tree and feeling like one was literally being aimed at, was no spring holiday. We drove back to Austin, in central Texas, that evening, and I read about the bolt that hit Thomas the next day. The wonder wasn't that he was killed, but that more weren't. But then maybe not that many people called Graves were out in boats at the right time.

Dennis Stacy
Texas

EMBALMED CATS

One of the stranger anomalies in archaeology is the discovery of 'out-of-place' artefacts – a good example being the finding of Chinese seals in Eire (see *Complete Books of Charles Fort* p.159). Archaeologists cannot explain why these seals should turn up so far from where they were made. Similar foreign objects are found in Britain and I would like to suggest how one group might have arrived here.

Some ten years ago, Basil Brown died. Basil was the man who discovered the ship burial at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, reckoned to be the single richest archaeological find in Britain. I was lucky enough to know him very well, and on his death inherited many of his books and papers. Amongst other things was a small, glass-fronted box containing a shapeless, black lump. Closer inspection revealed the weave of some fabric and a bone where the material had been cut across [see **photograph.**] I wouldn't have known what to make of this but for a flaking and fading newspaper cutting (undated) stuck to the back of the box. This reads:

CONSIGNMENT
OF MUMMIFIED CATS

Messrs. Treventon and Co. of Liverpool have just received a consignment of 19 tons of embalmed cats which are to be used as manure. The cargo contains no less than 180,000 specimens of the feline species supposed to have been buried 2,000 years B.C. in a subterranean cemetery about 100 miles from Cairo into which an Egyptian fellah was accidentally precipitated. The cats were found laid out in rows one on top of the other and all duly embalmed as though dead Egyptian notables and was bought for consignment in Egypt at 70s.9d. per ton.

Clearly, some worker in Britain had picked up an odd head from this load and kept it as a curiosity along with the newspaper cutting. Presumably the other 179,999 cats went on to British fields as a very unusual manure. Now it is well known that human mummies had small personal items bound into the linen bandages used to wrap the corpses – perhaps such items were also included with these cats? Such an hypothesis could explain the occasional finds of small Egyptian artifacts in 'out-of-place' locations.

I was actually prompted to write this note by a letter from Bob Skinner, one of FT's regular correspondents, who had noticed a recent letter in the *Daily Mirror* (26 June 1987) asking if the story of mummified cats being used as manure was true. The reply from the paper was non-committal. Bob, however, had also located an entry in *Haydn's Dictionary of Dates* (25th edition p.926) which reads under the heading "Mummies" – "Discovery of a large burial place of mummified cats, sacred animals, in central Egypt, sold as manure; 28 tons brought to Liverpool – February 1890." So there's the story, authenticated (apart from the weight) dated and up for discussion – any observations anybody?

Peter Christie
Bideford, Devon

COINCIDENCE IN HONG KONG

Late in 1986, my wife'e employer visited Sweden and brought back a pair of earrings for her which he had bought there. On the evening of the day he gave them to her, we came home to find a parcel waiting from a friend in the USA. Inside were two books for me and another pair of earrings for Mina, *identical* to the first except in colour (one pair blue, the other green). They were of a fairly uncommon pattern, a series of hanging leaves. Allowing for the fact that both donors knew my wife's taste, the odds against someone in Hong Kong receiving the same earrings on

the same day from different countries must be incalculably great.

To the list of amusing Chinese names [**FT48** p.21], I would like to add the Hop On Bicycle Company, Lee Kee Boots and Shoes, and my personal favourite, the Hung Fat Brassiere Factory.

Rod Parkes
Hong Kong

SOME PROPERTIES OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Your generous review of my piece of fiction, *A Secret Property* (**FT49** p72) deserves the courtesy of a comment. I have recently placed on record elsewhere (*Magonia* No.29, April 1988) a fuller account than proved possible in the novel of my official dealings with the UFO phenomenon during my service with the Air Ministry and the Ministry of Defence between 1949 and 1977. I need not repeat this here except to reiterate one or two points that deserve emphasis.

● 1. I have no indication at all from my 28 years' service that Whitehall ever took (up to 1977) more than a perfunctory, uneasy and unsystematic approach to the "saucer question". We received many reports from the public (most of low quality) and a few through RAF and civil aviation channels (to a higher standard of observation) which suggested the frequent occurrence of an elusive phenomenon. All of them were carefully considered for their possible evidence of intrusions into British airospace of enemy hardware which had no right to be there. It is well known that the Russians test our air defenses almost daily; occasionally they overstep the margins of this dangerous game; from time to time RAF aircraft are scrambled to make clear to them that we are not to be caught off guard. Whether or not this frequent, macho exercise with manned aircraft makes any sense in an era of unmanned ballistic overkill on both sides is beside the point. The fact is that the game was being played as late as 1977 and I have little doubt still is. The Air Staff therefore took seriously any suggestion – eg the Bentwaters/Lakenheath events of 13/14 August 1956 or even a telephone call in the small hours that two old ladies had seen (I quote) a "flying hoop" above Scarborough – that the Russian "milk patrol" had, for once, "got away with it". I have to add that we never once (anyway during the periods when I was at the hard end of the subject) found any evidence that the Russians had caught us out – and at that point our interest ended.

● 2. I have no doubt at all that a proportion of the reports reaching us indicated a real phenomenon of a character beyond ready explanation. Some of them worried me and also, I believe, my Air Staff colleagues. But they never persisted (in the sense of occurring twice at the same location); they never did serious damage to defense installations; and they never offered "hard" traces of a kind open to serious scientific investigation. It is no responsibility of a Defense department to pursue "ghost stories". Whether or not we were neglecting our public duty I must leave to others. (There was not, alas, any Department of Fortean Events to which we might have referred the uneasier of our reports.)

● 3. Although Timothy Good records me (with my agreement) as acknowledging that I may well never have seen the "best" cases, we must clarify "best". If by "best" we mean anything approaching – for example – Whitley Strieber's account of his transactions with non–human entities, my staff would not have troubled me with anything of the kind and I would not have thanked them if they had. We were usually preoccupied with more pedestrian matters (the airlifting of British citizens out of Uganda, the protection of British installations from Islamic fundamentalists, the ferrying of medical supplies to earthquake disasters and so on.)

● 4. Although Jenny Randles (among others) has frequently paid me the exciting compliment of supposing that I was "the former Head of the MOD's UFO department", my Division, DS8 (Defence Secretariat 8) was nothing of the kind. DS8's job was to act in support of RAF operations. We only received reports of unidentified aerial phenomena lest they should, perchance, indicate that our air defence capabilities were less adequate than we hoped. A sister Division (though I trust I shall not be thought sexist in so describing it) also received such reports whenever the clerks responsible for the distribution of papers considered that the report reaching the MOD indicated a complaint about low flying rather than a possible Russian intrusion. In consequence, there was often something of a muddle between DS8 and its colleagues about which of us should deal with the latest "ghost story". But neither of us was a "UFO department". (I have been glad to see that since I left the MOD in 1977 the arrangements have been tidied up: there is now only a single "point of entry" for reports of unidentified aerial phenomena. It has been lodged in the Division responsible for RAF operations. This makes sense. It does not, in itself, indicate anything except clearer lines of administration.)

● 5. I happen to believe that there *is* a "UFO phenomenon" of a highly interesting and possibly important kind. I saw the evidence for it in a proportion of the reports which I handled during my service with the MOD – and there is, of course, much richer evidence available to ufologists from the many non–governmental groups which study the matter.

Nothing I have said above is meant to cast doubt on the "core phenomenon" – merely on the supposed interest of the MOD in it during my period of service.

● 6. I think there is strong evidence that the MOD has recently begun to take a far more systematic approach to the phenomenon than was true up to 1977. Page 454 of Timothy Good's book, *Above Top Secret*, reproduces a highly interesting questionnaire which is used by civil air traffic controllers when receiving reports from the public about sightings of unidentified phenomena. And – as Good records – I have established (by slightly improper experimentation) that MOD duty staff and the Flying Complaints staff at RAF Rudloe Manor use the same questionnaire. It is couched in terms which suggest to me that somebody in Whitehall has begun to grope after a scientific hypothesis. (Whether or not this is a waste of taxpayers' money on the part of a department primarily concerned with national defence can perhaps be left to the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons.)

● 7. I detect a degree of reticence on the part of the MOD in dealing with enquiries from the public (even, indeed, from celebrated ufologists) on the UFO question. I gave my reasons in the afterword to *A Secret Property*. Their handling of the Colonel Halt/Rendlesham affair was shoddy, to say the least. The most likely hypothesis is that they were simply embarrassed by it. But I think I detect something more: viz. bafflement,together with an unwillingness to say so. As a ufologist (now mercifully ex–MOD), I find this most encouraging: perhaps we are not wasting our time on a mere spectre after all.

● 8. *A Secret Property* was not written as a *roman a clef*. It was written for the sheer fun of seeing how far my science fiction imagination would take me in response to a lucky commission from Quartet Books on a phenomenon I believe is entirely "real" (in some sense or other) and which remains deeply puzzling and perhaps important. I was delighted with your review: I hope that thousands of your readers will now buy the book. I also intend to pursue (in more sober form) some guesses I have about the phenomenon (and for which my government backing may be handy). I trust that I shall now be able to do so without attracting the suspicion that I am an agent of deception (and free also, I hope, from the attentions of the Attorney General).

Ralph Noyes
London

SHC – TWO VIEWS

The evidence for 'spontaneous human combustion' (SHC) is so well documented by now as to be almost overwhelming. However, whether or not the evidence is accepted is another matter, since when anyone is presented with an event which falls outside the scope of 'normal' experience (or what we are indoctrinated to accept as the norm), it is, for most people, impossible to accept, because it would mean revising and questioning everything that one had learned in a lifetime! It is only the open, flexible mind and, paradoxically, the skeptical mind, which has questioned and sought the truth from the beginning, that is able to accept the occurrence of inexplicable phenomena.

It is acknowledged in most esoteric teachings that the four elements – earth, air, fire and water – are an integral part of existence, from spiritual through to physical. In the human body these exist on a psychic level in the various *chakras* or power centres; physically, they are obvious as minerals, oxygen, temperature and blood.

Although my knowledge of yoga is merely peripheral, I know that in its advanced forms, the aim is to awaken these various centres; and the adept who has succeeded in awakening the *Manipura chakra* (the fire centre), located in the solar plexus, believes the fire is real and intensifies the human aura so that he literally glows in a darkened room. Needless to say, this form of yoga is only undertaken by the highly disciplined and totally dedicated. In the Tibetan practice of *Tumo*, the yogi is able to generate enough internal heat to enable him to bathe in freezing water without discomfort.

It is my contention that in the case of SHC, somehow, something has gone wrong in the body, putting this *chakra* out of control. How or why it happens remains unknown. Investigation cannot take place until the fact that it actually *does* happen is accepted.

Joan A. Good
London.

To crack the mystery of psi phenomena, we need, as a starting point, a repeated effect with measurable parameters. SHC is a 'precise' phenomenon, which might be measured, as it is a physical change (like melting an ice cube).

Residues of SHC indicate that it is, more accurately, a Spontaneous *Destructive Distillation* (SDD), as with wood to 'wood alcohol', or coal to gas/tar/coke. Residues have been described as **oily** (on walls and ceilings), and **calcined** at source (mineral matter with all organic binders driven off). Conversely, combustion (apparently rapid) in a closed room would suffer limited oxygen and lead to soot and "charred" remains plus smoke galore!

As a 'Stan Goochist', I suspect Will/Mind ceases with death, yet SDD runs its course. Thus, while a state of mind may start the show, it can hardly see it through! The inner poltergeist probably goes 'critical' like a nuclear reactor

out of control, and similarly continues energetic self–destruction even after the operating mechanism has ceased to be.

As every Tibetan schoolboy knows, *kundalini* melts snow around the lama adept. Kundalini is generated in the spine, and can kill if evoked in the uninitiated. Can this force, or something related to it, go 'critical'? Photographs of SDD show an oval area of 'overkill', with minimal destruction outside it. Is this oval the 'Kundalini Zone' of the spine? Are we dealing with an ellipsoid quasi–plasma (good, eh?) generated (in the mathematical sense) on the spine and contained by an associated magnetic field? Won't the fusion physicists be pleased!

To the response: "Ah! But what about the visible flaming on some occasions?" I suggest high temperatures plus organic distillates and vapours would certainly be a fire risk in an oxygen atmosphere – **but this is a secondary effect,** not always present. (Coking of coal has to be done in total exclusion of air to avoid drama.)

Is there a boffin out there who cares to make a few calculations on the energy required (closed system?) to distill all the water and organics out of a 'standard body'? All we have to do then is find out where all that energy comes from!

Barry Singleton
Newbury, Berks

[Two overlapping expressions. Many others have wondered about 'psychic heat' techniques in yogic and shamanic magical technology – but please don't let this initiative stop here. SHC, and perhaps SDD, have been long overdue for a shakedown. As Barry points out, there is a tangible physical component, upon which the enterprising Fortean scientist should be able to get a handle. We need more ideas, more theories, and mostly more discussion. Go for it ! -- RMJR.]

Drawing © Mrs Anneke J.C. Holwerda-'t Hart.

A VISION IN THE SOUTH-WEST OF IRELAND

When I retired in May 1977 [as a Colonel in the Royal Netherlands Army], my wife and I moved into a bungalow we had bought in the south-west of Ireland, situated on top of a hill near the village of Greenane, about 4 miles from Kenmare, County Kerry. It was built on the site of an old farmhouse, a few remains of which could still be found, like a concrete cistern for sheep-dipping and the walls of a cow-shed.

It was quite a lonely spot. Our nearest neighbour, an old farmer, lived with his two sons about half a mile away. He told me that the old farm had belonged to his aunt, and drew my attention to the traces of the old outhouses. Sometimes at night, my wife and I heard strange sounds, like a vague rumbling of voices. We explained them away as wind in the electricity wires.

Two years later we moved and sold the bungalow to a gentleman who later became a friend. On a sunny afternoon in the summer of 1985, he and a lady friend were doing odd jobs in the garden. She was cleaning a part of the old

wall – the idea being to turn it into a sort of rock garden – when she cried out in terror and ran into the house. Ashen faced, she said again and again: "I saw somebody." Being a talented sketcher she drew what she had seen: the figures of a young couple. Not satisfied with the face of the woman, she rubbed a part of it out. The man was holding a spade and the woman a pail. She also noted that the woman wore a rather peculiar type of shoe, which she sketched in one corner.

Our friend, the owner of the bungalow, had not seen anybody. The house can only be approached by a narrow path; the garden is well fenced and it is impossible to come near the house unnoticed when somebody is in the garden, where one has a good view of both path and gate. It is such a lonely spot that somebody's arrival is always a major event. The lady friend afterwards said the couple had been standing near the wall of the old cow shed and were as clearly discernable as anything in the garden. When she ran into the house they were gone. The old neighbour did not recognise the couple when he was shown the picture, but the woman's clothes reminded him of those worn by old women in his youth.

Leen Verhoeff

Kenmare. Summer 1986.

Truss Fund

Our grateful thanks for their donations go to: *William Bibza, Sid Birchby, Terrell Bradley, Bruce Chatterton, Peter Christie, Loren Coleman, Andrew J.Farrow, Ron Gauntlett, Mia Gerhardt, H.O.Hendricks, Pieter Hendrickx, Susan Hetherington, J.T.Kirkwood, Al Lopez, John S.Oney, Mike Rowe, Leen Verhoeff, and Owen Whiteoak.*

Help!

☎ University researcher, writing a book on western spiritual teachers, requires info on **Lobsang Rampa**: real name, biography, newsclips. Any help will be acknowledged. Andrew Rawlinson, Dept. of Religious Studies, University of Lancaster, Lancaster LA1 4YG.

☎ **Back issues** of UFO bulletins and mags wanted (eventually on exchange basis). Write: Pieter Hendrickx, Hakendoverstraat 7, B-3350 Linter-Wommersom, Belgium.

☎ Loren Coleman is conducting extensive research on the early cryptozoological contributions of **Tom Slick** and the **Slick–Johnson expeditions** to the Himalayas and the Pacific Northwest, 1957–1962. Any personal information, archival material, photographic records and/or technical data on the Slick field searches will be greatly appreaciated, and acknowledged. Confidentiality will also be respected. This major retrospective treatment will be scientific in nature and will not dwell on personality conflicts or misunderstandings. The scope and importance of Tom Slick's legacy has only belatedly been recognized, and this historic review of his work will be the most thorough to be published. Contact: Loren Coleman (TS Project), 124 Ocean Ave, Portland, Maine 04103, USA.

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Unknown something seen pulling cosmos

Biologists find secrets of life in the phone book

By Our Technology Correspondent

Biologists are using telephone directories to study the evolution of man. D Telegraph 23 Oct 87

Atlantic sold for £535,000

23 MOVES TO ANOTHER DRAW

Moses fails to answer 999 call

Bill aims to help Broads flourish under new body

St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch 25 Feb 87

Teen didn't find message in bottle

SP

9 Nov 86 Houston Chronicle

NEBRASKA CITY, Neb. (AP) — A teenager who dropped a bottle into the Missouri River more than a year ago says it led to a letter from a girl in Northern Ireland. But the girl now says she was kidding when she wrote that she found his address in a bottle. 9 Nov 86

MAN MUGGED BY TWO RABBITS AND GORILLA

Freemasons abolish beheading

LONDON (UPI) — Beheading and ripping out the tongue have been abolished by the British Freemasons as penalties for violating the solemn code of the secret society, it was reported

Big Foot Might Be Small Stump

RB

BEND, Ore. (AP) — Big Foot was abroad here over the weekend, or so thought two Portland area hunters who traced into the Wizard Falls fish hatchery to report they had shot something that looked like the legendary ape-like creature.

Gary Benson, 25, and Ronald Kershey, 25, said they fired their weapons after being attacked by a seven foot-tall creature with a monkey face. The men said the thing was furry and all black except for silver fur at the shoulders.

But a state trooper said that all he could find was a stump with four bullet holes when the men took him to the site Sunday.

THE PLAIN DEALER, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1986

Exploding star stuns astronomers

Kenya in purge on aliens

Guardian 21 Mar 87

From Lindsey Hilsum in Nairobi

KILLER TOADS RUNNING WILD

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Three ... Glenda near their cross-country ... pound toads that weren't a ...

N.Y. Post 22 Apr 87 ML

Phoenix is given Last Rites

Man with mental trouble made way to Oval Office

Firemen give kiss of life to tarantula

D Telegraph 23 Mar 87

Monster gets life

Torrential rains kill one in Spain

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)

Enormous void is not as empty as we thought

Pigs' hearts may save Jewish lives

Tar-smeared cars an 'act of God'

GNOME KING ON FRAUD CHARGES

Nervous City awaits more falls

Island hedgehogs leave by air

PAUL SIEVEKING JAN 1988

Turkey turns serious over turtles threat

Brilliant lunatic escapes!

Cunning crackpot Billy Milligan called on the skill of one of the 24 personalities in his tortured brain to escape from an insane asylum

D Mail 27 July 87

Ostrich tramples cowboy

An Oklahoma cowboy suffered a fractured skull in what was almost his last roundup — when he was trampled by a 9-foot-tall, 400-pound ostrich.

farm in Oklahoma, said Martin.

The roundup was going smoothly until the huge male bird jumped a fence, said police. The burly beast knocked Goody over backwards and

Mum in rhubarb tragedy

A HOUSEWIFE stabbed herself to death in a freak accident when she went to cut rhubarb for lunch. Sun 4 May 87

China stolen in sneak raid

Monkeys take over airport

AN airport was reduced to chaos yesterday by a group of monkeys.

Some escaped from their transit cages at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport and set the rest out. Then they discovered the cargo lift buttons and started riding up and down.

Murdoch warned on FT takeover

Hungry hamster starts house fire

EARTH IS THREATENED BY TERMITE FLATULENCE

God's power to stop pain 'limited'

Hungry elephant kills clown dressed as a giant peanut

Humble turnip proves to be an alien

Caterpillar rebels face pressure

Angered by sadistic slaughter . . .

Shrink strangles mass murderer!

Sickened by the barbaric confession of a mass murderer, a police psychologist cracked under the strain — and strangled the killer

parts of the Peruvian capital

D. MIRROR 10 OCT 1987 NM

ELVIS HAUNTS CANTEEN TILL

CANTEEN ladies at a factory are convinced that the ghost of Elvis Presley is haunting their cash register.

Every Wednesday morning, at precisely 8.50am, the electronic machine blasts out the Elvis hit Love Me Tender.

It started on the 10th anniversary of Presley's death and has continued every Wednesday since.

Christine Hancock, manageress of the canteen, said ...

SPOOKY: Elvis

BACKISSUES

★FT1-30 — Out of print.

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★FT31 — The Chinese Wildman; Gateways to mystery; the Touch of Death; UFO muggers; Mystery maned big cats in USA; ball lightning; synchronous names; little people; and fake doctors.

★FT32 — Canadian blob fall; mystery big cats in USA, UK and Australia; Gateways (pt.2); occult murder; fairy tales come true; child sacrifice; Chinese and Indian Forteana.

32

★FT33 — The Enfield Poltergeist; mythology of UFO abductions; Gateways (pt.3); mass hysteria at Nottingham; simulacra; coffin stories; giant snakes; Eastern European UFOs; Jeoff Watson's Nessie pix; and Chinese Forteana.

33

★FT34 — Congo dinosaur hunt; phantom hitch-hikers; lake monster names; interview with Dr Jean Bolen on synchronicity; the Welsh 'puma' and other big cats; beached whales; animal saboteurs; nature follows art; ice falls; inept crimes; Trashkashic records; odd Irish doings; and giant squids.

★FT35 — The Myth of Darwinism; an SHC from 1744; the Run-Runamo Runes; Far Eastern Forteana; spontaneous combustions; antiquities; strange trees; magic fuels; frog and stone falls; mystery big cats; bizarre bacteria; TV science; occult murder; and Fortean travel in USA.

34

★FT36 — Anomalistics; photos of Jesus; *Gent's Mag* extracts; hermits and wildmen; strange tales; toads in holes; bleeding statues and visions; the Buddha's UFO; DIY surgery; coin, ice and sand falls; ASSAP and CSAR; jellyfish in the sky; Forteana from China; USA monitor lizards; and Nessie.

★FT37 — Australia's lizard monsters; energy from space; encounters with Greek gods; interview with Dr Rupert Sheldrake on a *New Science of Life*; a female prophet; Irish oddities; mystery USA kangaroos; UFO hallucinations; falls of crabs, frogs, peas and fish; visions, stigmatics and fasting; plants in odd places; UK bear scares; talking polts; homing rings; and family incarcerations.

★FT38 — Psychometry of cattle mutilations; isotope myth; synchronicity of clowns and 22; two BVM visions; talking polts; recent discoveries of old and new species; objects penetrating brains; double image; strange fires; Rasta folklore; comix columns and letters.

35

★FT39 — Robert Anton Wilson on Synchronicity in *Finnegan's Wake*; SHC survivor Jack Angel; entombed toads; *Gent's Mag* extracts (pt.2); homing wallets; mystery cats; snippers and snatchers; Chinese hair-clipping panics; death tableaux; ice falls; updates; columns, letters and comix.

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● FT40 - Out of print.

● FT41 – 10th anniversary special issue. Articles by the Bords, Christie, Clark, Coleman, Costello, Evans, Fideler, Heuvelmans, Hoffman, Keel, Michell, Moore, Pennick, Persinger, Rickard, Shepard, Shiels, Westrum and X. Art by Emerson & Pokkettz. 76pp.

● FT42 – the start of our *Strange Days* section, a world news roundup of the whole spectrum of oddities, and a column gleaned from William Corliss' *Science Frontiers*. Plus Michael Persinger interview; giant squid hypothesis for lake monsters; Exmoor Beast; fire nanny case; world sightings of the Blessed Virgin; bleeding statues; coffin humour; mermaid controversy; bad luck; and the east London fishfall. 76pp.

● FT43 – was Columbus two men?; the Cottingley fairy photos; lightning at York Minster; human horns; modern folklore; strange trees; drunken animals; Forteana from France, Iceland and the Philippines; polts; ice falls; and Polish BVMs. 72pp.

● FT44 – Thomas Short, 18th cent. portent chronicler; Chinese falls; lycanthropy and ergotism; fairies; UFO hypotheses; combustion of objects and humans; earth divot mystery; British big cat survey; African Forteana; Indian wolf boy; a teleporting astrologer; and falls of sand, nuts, fruit and fish. 76pp.

● FT45 – phantom attackers; Annie Taylor; *Gent's Mag* extracts; the 1913 airship scare; recent feral humans; Forteana from Finland and the USSR; Ireland's moving statues; Scotland's giant cat carcases; mystery mushroom cloud; burial mix-ups; bad luck; stone eater; and talking bear. 76pp.

● FT46 – water monsters from around the world; mystery of a new Nessie photo, and comments on some old ones; digital photographic retouching; Chinese folk magic; SHC on TV; fetishism; swarms; Exmoor Beast; ruined cities; crying boy curse; cults; and historical revisionism. 76pp.

● FT47 – odd eggs and trees; super centenarians; SHC inquest; Halley's Comet as a portent; Diary of a Mad Planet during the comet's visit; Operation Congo; vampirism and porphyria; Chinese Forteana; unnoticed pregnancies; corn circles; mystery sniper; occult crimes; elephants; and the Indian 'Water Boy'. 76pp.

● FT48 – putative yeti photo; images in eyes; death of William Rufus; 19th cent. encounter case from Japan; Joseph Glanvil, 17th cent. psychic researcher; Jerusalem's fireballs; physical rejuvenation in old age; the truth about the magnetic cloud; sleep violence; reincarnation; and the Welsh in America before Columbus. 80pp.

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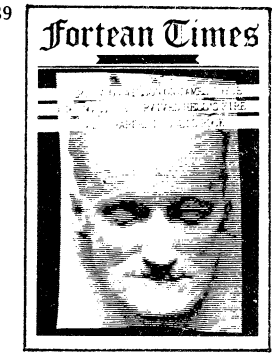

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BLOWING OUR OWN TRUMPET DEPT: UNSOLICITED ACCOLADES FROM READERS

"Thanks for taking the time to produce a quality product well worth the price."
Robert Gifford, Lancaster, Penn.

"If it is possible, FT is getting better with each issue. It is by far the best magazine in the field."
Frank Brownley, Rochester, NY.

"I know [FT] well and take this opportunity of congratulating you on your skilful editing and judicious selection of material."
Dr Eric J. Dingwall, Brighton.

"FT is one of my favourite magazines. What a tremendous amount of fascinating facts, ideas and theories you manage to pack into each issue... I find your book reviews very helpful in deciding what I want to read next."
B.F.Greene, Waban, Mass.

"Hearty congratulations on the continued excellence of FT... I am grateful for your extraordinary work."
Charles R. Bailey, Baltimore, Maryland.

"Thank you for being the most consistently thoughtful and excellent periodical I know."
Bronek Szerszynski, Nottingham.

"FT gives me a good deal of satisfaction, buttressing my sanity in a world of absurd happenings... I love its contents [and] the occasional comments inserted by the editors and writers. It is appropriately ironic, skeptical and compassionate... You seem to have a sure touch, delving into the unknown with scholarship, skeptical without being cynical, and with a sympathetic view of human folly... Also, I find the broad range of phenomena you cover most satisfying."
Martin Lasko, Philadelphia, Penn.

"FT is, in my opinion, one of the very best. I don't know how you do it, but carry on!"
Jonathan Mullard, editor *Earthlines.*

"As you will gather from my acquisiton of back numbers, I find FT to be quite fascinating and excellent value for money. I particularly like the pervasive leavening of humour which ensures the journal does not sink into the doze of solemn sectarian crankiness..."
T.S. Morgan, Hatfield, Herts.

"What a wonderful publication! Dear God, what have I been missing all these years?"
Alan J. Rooke, Brentford, Essex.

"Once again FT was a cover-to-cover read. It is the greatest journal in existence and more fun than a backyard swing... My library would be truly incomplete without all your output."
Loren Coleman, author, Portland, Maine.

"FT, as ever, combines the mindblowing, macabre and hilarious in a unique fashion."
R.M. Calverley, London.

"I must say that I wish you had a hundred-page magazine as I almost devour it as soon as it comes into the house. I admire your effort... Each issue is better, more professional, better edited, better art directed... The new format is positively beautiful... "
David Walley, New York City.

"It was with great pleasure and excitement that I received my first copy of your delightful publication."
D.M. Kalman, London.

"We really enjoy every issue of FT. It's a struggle to avoid imitating it."
Tim Ashbaugh, editor, *The Network.*

"Thank you very much for the wonderful work you are doing... Don't give up a millimeter of fortean ideology... the fortean way of seeing things is vitally important"
Walter Jörg Langbein, author, Lügde, W.Germany.

"The mixture of cartoons and strange natural events is unique, and of particular appeal to an ageing hippie like myself."
Shirley McIver, Holgate, York.

"Far and away the best magazine to probe - and chronicle, report and even to laugh at - the baffling and unexplained mysteries of our world. Every issue stretches the mind by a quantum leap."
Tam Mossman, editor, *Metapsychology.*

"FT... is far superior to and more interesting than any other such magazine I've come across... "
Caryl Sibbett, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim.

"I thought the latest FT was positively scintillating... FT really is most singular."
Tom Adams, Project Stigma, Paris, Texas.

"FT is the thing I most like to find in my mailbox... I love this pokey little paper with its treasure trove of weird... "
Ann Fitzgerald, Washington DC.

"You keep me in touch with the real world - keep it up!"
Roger Broadie, Sheffield, Yorkshire.

"... wish we could adequately express the wonderment and appreciation for the incredible efforts you all so generously contribute to producing FT. It is truly an astounding publication, but no more so than the dedication necessary to manifest it."
Larry Arnold, PSI, Harrisburg, Penn.

"My impatience for each new issue of FT is proportional to the excellence of the previous one. Its scholarly value aside, it is hugely entertaining."
Dwight Whalen, author, Mississauga, Ontario.

"Congratulations on what I consider to be the best fortean journal that I've ever had the pleasure to study."
Anthony Smith, Bilston, W.Midlands.

"Quite honestly, I sit back in amazement at the incredible amount of data you seem to have digested and cross-referenced... As a matter of fact I go through periods of information overload and have to detox by visiting friends or the bar."
Jacob Davidson, editor, *Full Moon.* Hawaii

"... I must subscribe immediately and regret not having done so before."
Merrily Harpur, *London.*

"FT really is a fine magazine and a mine of information."
Paul Begg, author, Norfolk.

"FT has something of the flavour of the old *Doubt,* while at the same time being quite up to date... "
Lucius Farish, *UFO News Clipping Service.*

"Congratulations on an astonishingly original publication! The intellectual stimulation in every issue is a bombshell in the mail... and those graphics by Hunt Emerson are objects of contemplation. It takes me days to recover."
William Zeiser, Missouri.

"... an excellent compendium... "
Brad Steiger, author, USA.

"FT ia a wow!"
Stephen Thompson (14), Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear.

"Everyone told me what a fine publication yours is, and finally when I got the chance to see it, I knew they weren't wrong. The years have convinced me that forteans are virtually the only sane species left on this planet and your magazine speaks well for us all."
Jerome Clark, associate editor, *Fate.*

"FT arrived the other day and it's as amazing as usual. I don't know how you do it. It's worth the price for the book reviews alone... A damned high class magazine."
Robert Schadewald, author, Minnesota.

"FT is the finest fortean journal around."
John Keel, author, New York.

"If I wasn't convinced before the arrival of FT, that this world is the absolute opposite of boring, I'm convinced now... FT is usually fascinating, oft hilarious. I'm quite taken by those heading graphics. One could feel most frustrated if this vehicle did not exist."
David Tame, author, Warkshire.

"Congratulations on the excellent format of recent issues of FT... You are doing a marvellous job in carrying on the Fort tradition."
Vincent Gaddis, author, California.

"Your book reviews are very helpful, in their contents, thorough assessments and their quantity, for a guy in the sticks... We are grateful... "
John Hitchens, Sussex.

"Your publication is superbly put together with material of the most intriguing kind. A journal of such quality should be read by everyone interested in this strange unpredictable but wonderful world of ours."
Raphael Butler, Matteson, Illinois.

"[FT] spellbound me. You have a fascinating, amusing magazine."
Jerome Salzmann, United Nations, NY.

"The latest FT was a real knockout! You guys are doing a superb job and I offer my congratulations and cheer you on. FT is the greatest!"
Tom Bearden, editor, *Specula.*

"Your magazine is terrific! The best I've ever subscribed to. I hope you are able to publish for many years to come."
Steve Mooser, Laguna Beach, Calif.

"I keep showing [FT] around to all I know, because you have anything we put out beat, even tho' we have some good publications... Believe me, this is one reader who really appreciates you."
Mrs Day Schwartz, Norfolk, Virginia.

...AND FROM OTHER JOURNALS...

"... Britain's most astounding magazine... "
Andrew Tyler
in *Time Out* (Dec. 1983).

"[FT] exudes a delightful sense of humour and a healthy excitement for all things strange and wonderful... [It] offers eccentric columnists, odd comic strips, and elegant shoestring design. Great fun to read, and a continuing testament to the strangeness of our world."
Ted Schultz
in *Whole Earth Review* (1986).

"FT is the stuff of dreams externalized... [It] comes on chatty, like an affable old geezer who delights in the strangeness of the human condition."
Jay Kinney
in *CoEvolution Quarterly.*

"... the single best fortean periodical... must reading for serious students of the unexplained... If you are going to read only one fortean periodical [FT] is the one you want."
J. Gordon Melton
in *Fate* (May 1979).

"... the finest fortean journal in or out of existence... a professionally printed, well-edited, fact-packed compendium of anomaly reports from all over the world; it also publishes thoughtful, literate articles and essays on fortean issues. Best of all, it is wonderfully funny."
Jerome Clark
in *Fate* (June 1984).

"... a magnificent contribution to fortean research and publication."
Paul Willis
in *INFO Journal* (July 1976).

ABOUT FORTEAN TIMES

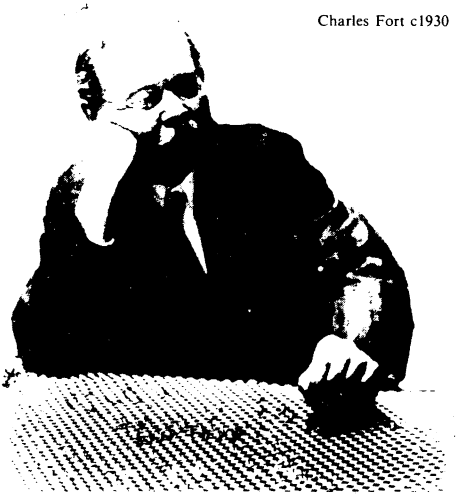
FORTEAN TIMES was established by Bob Rickard in 1973 to continue the work of the American iconoclastic philosopher Charles Fort (1874-1932), collecting and circulating current accounts of strange phenomena and experiences in an informal but factual manner, spiced with a droll sense of humour. The first 15 issues were called THE NEWS and appeared bimonthly. The name-change came in 1976, since when the magazine has grown fatter and more professional in appearance. In 1985, Paul Sieveking became joint editor, to help out a beleaguered Bob Rickard, and they now edit alternate issues.

Since 1983 each issue has had between 70-80 pages, and is currently word-processed and photoset from floppy disk. Except for the setting and printing, most aspects of **FORTEAN TIMES** production and administration have depended upon unpaid volunteers without an office. Nevertheless we have striven for excellence, and to judge by the satisfied comments of our readers [see elsewhere in this leaflet], many of whom are professional writers or scientists, we are not doing too badly. Each issue is crammed with articles, columns, annotated summaries of the cream of the latest crop of clippings sent in by readers all over the world, letters, book reviews and journal listings, cartoons and illustrations.

FORTEAN TIMES is in the grand tradition of dedicated but under-financed specialist amateur periodicals, and, through its pages, is the gateway to many other groups of enthusiasts. Given more time and money we could be fat and frequent. Although we try hard to appear quarterly, it is not always possible; but we assure new subscribers that they will (in time) get the number of issues they pay for.

FORTEAN TIMES is associated with several other ventures: Bob Rickard's **Fortean Tomes**, a newly founded publishing venture specialising in serious books of fortean interest; the 'group's' archive arm, **Archives for Fortean Research**, also founded by Rickard, which is concerned with data storage and the development of a fortean computer database; and the **Fortean Picture Library**, founded by Rickard and Janet & Colin Bord as a rescue operation for visual fortean material, financed by functioning as a commercial picture agency. If you have material you think will interest FPL, why not write to Janet Bord (Melysfan, Llangwm, Corwen, Clwyd LL21 0RD).

Charles Fort c1930



HOW YOU CAN HELP

■ **SUBSCRIBE or RENEW** without delay.

■ **ARTICLES or ART** - We want to encourage new talent, and will always help budding (and even established) forteans where we can - with advice, comments or information - but please contact the editors first. Enclosing SAEs etc ensures a quicker reply.

■ **LETTERS of comment or experience** - if you are so moved, send us a letter. We reserve the right to edit; shorter letters have a better chance of publication.

■ Our **HELP!** column publishes free any reader's genuine inquiry or plea for information; again, the shorter the better. Ideal for contacts, help with research or tracking special books, etc. We also have a **Small Ads** column for more commercial notices, but we must make a small charge for that.

■ **CLIPPINGS** - are always welcome. Don't cry off thinking someone else will have sent it in. Clip it now! We get remarkably few duplications. Always remember to add a note of the **SOURCE**, the **DATE** and your **NAME** (we always credit our clipsters). Don't stop at newspapers; clip anything that rustles, journals, science mags, local press - or send photocopies of scrapbooks, passages in books, memoires, travelogues etc. Nothing is wasted! Used and unused clips are passed to the **Archives for Fortean Research**.

■ **DONATIONS** - The generosity of many readers has helped saved our bacon on many occasions. If you've any spare cash (we're not joking) put it where it will do a lot of good and be gratefully received and acknowledged in the magazine.

■ Give **GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS** - see the order form. One reader caught the right spirit: "My younger brother has devoted the first 39 years of his life to being 'normal'... Let's pull the rug out from under him. Send him a sub to FT." A great way to wake up friends and enemies alike, and maybe provide a lifeline to those on military service or in faraway places.

■ **MENTION** FT whenever you can, to friends or wherever it may do some good - especially if you are a writer, journalist or broadcaster.

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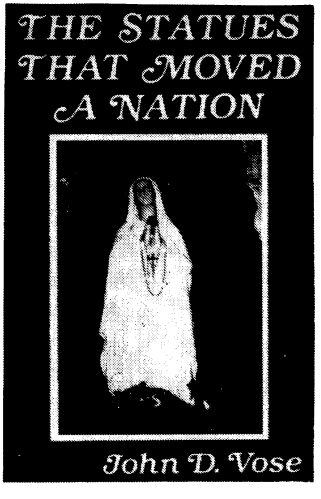
DEMONIC CONNECTION
TOYNE NEWTON
An Investigation into Satanism in England and the International Black Magic Company
Exposed in this book are a thousand years of devil-worship and the existence of a modern secret cult which, by combining ritual Black Magic and Satanism with techniques of mind manipulation, now poses a very real threat to society. By their political links and psychic influence, the members of this cult are fast spreading across the whole of Britain and the ostensibly civilised world.
The section of Sussex known as the Rape of Bramber appears to be the epitome of peaceful rural England, but during the past two decades many strange incidents have taken place there: the mysterious disappearances of dogs, reports of people being overcome by unseen forces, numerous UFO sightings and the unexplained deaths of, among others, a local vicar and a policeman.
Triggered by these inexplicable happenings, author Toyne Newton and his researchers have delved deep into the historical background of the area and by painstaking research have uncovered an awesome chain of events linking history to legend, legend to myth, myth to magic and magic back to the grim reality of today's startling media headlines.
EXCLUSIVE: The astonishing
about Britain's Devil worshipp
Satan's evil web
30,000 secret slaves who all believe God is an enemy



THE STATUES THAT MOVED A NATION
John D. Vose

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The Loch Ness Monster
The Horse-man of County Louth
The Nottingham Lion
The Orford Wild Man
The Cannich Cats
and many others

Graham J. McEwan

MYSTERY ANIMALS OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

GRAHAM J. McEWAN

Hideous monsters of lake, river and sea, mysterious big cats, huge phantasmagoric black dogs with burning eyes – these are just some examples of the incredible variety of strange creatures encountered in the British Isles over the centuries and right up to the present day.

In recent years some of these fabulous beasts, such as the Surrey Puma or the Beast of Exmoor, have attracted enormous public interest, and even after the media attention has faded the bizarre sightings continue. How are these often chilling apparitions to be explained? Do weird animals such as the infamous Loch Ness Monster, the Horse-man of County Louth and the Brentford Griffin really exist?

Graham McEwan sifts through the evidence for the existence of these strange beings and discusses the various theories which have been put forward to explain their presence throughout Britain and Ireland. During painstaking research he visited dozens of locations where sightings took place, collecting many eye-witness accounts and rare photographs which are published here for the first time.

HB. 240pp. 65 illus and line drawings.
£11.85 incl p&p.

CATFLAPS!

A SURVEY OF MYSTERY CATS IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

by

Andy Roberts.

A privately published booklet on mystery cats with a forward by Michael Goss. Includes; The Harrogate Panther; Rossendale Lion; Durham Puma; Whitby Linx; cats in lore & legend plus much more!

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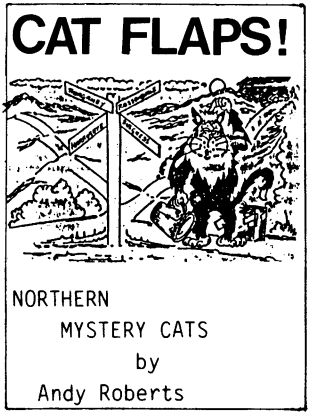

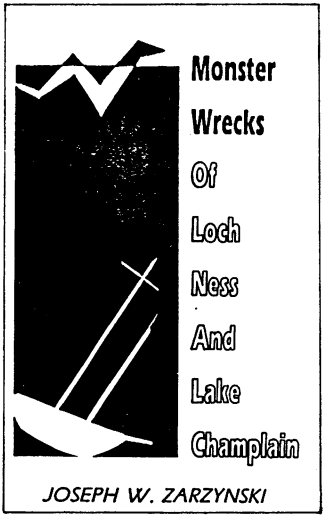

SIGNED COPIES OF....

MONSTER WRECKS OF LOCH NESS AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN

by

Joseph W. Zarzynski.

Scotland's Loch Ness and North America's Lake Champlain are most famous as the reputed home of lake monsters. However, both lakes hide other mysteries like: possible megalithic sites, ghostly apparitions, mini-monsters, ship and aircraft wrecks, and other tantalizing challenges. Zarzynski's new book probes the depths of these two enigmatic waterways.

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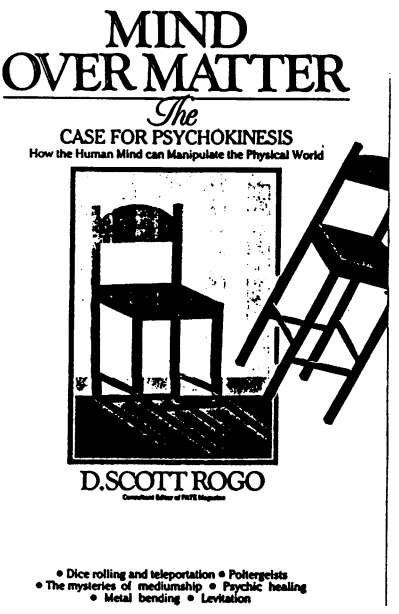
MIND
OVER MATTER
The
CASE FOR PSYCHOKINESIS
How the Human Mind can Manipulate the Physical World
D.SCOTT ROGO
Consultant Editor of FATE Magazine
• Dice rolling and teleportation • Poltergeists
• The mysteries of mediumship • Psychic healing
• Metal bending • Levitation

MIND OVER MATTER

Have you ever prayed in the hope that somehow your silent thoughts might influence material situations? Have you ever hit a golf ball and given it a 'mental boost' to help it on its way? How many times in your life have you tried to convince yourself that 'thinking makes it so'?

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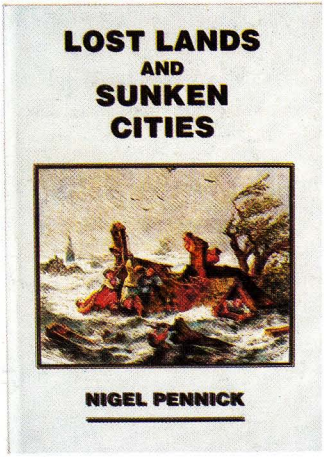

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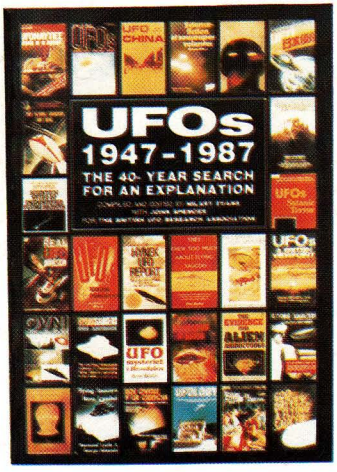

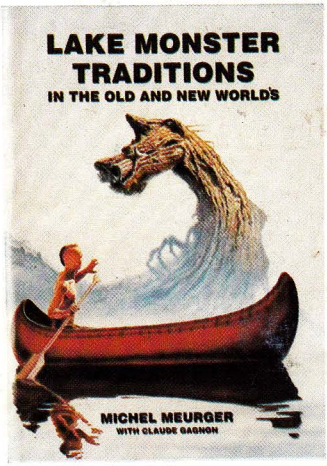

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